DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 228 351 UD 022 707

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TITLE 'Mary' and 'Eve's' Social Reproduction in the 'Big Apple'; Colombian Voices. Occasional Paper No. 35.
INSTITUTION New York Univ., NY. Faculty of Arts and Science.
SPONS AGENCY Tinker Foundation, New York, N.Y.
PUB DATE Jun 82
NOTE 91p.; Paper presented at the Conference on "Colombians and Dominicans in New York: Life Strategies in the Household and At Work" (New York, NY, June 4, 1982).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Cultural Influences; *Economic Factors; *Employment Experience; Employment Level; Family Relationship; *Females; Hispanic Americans; Illegal Immigra[illegible] *Immigrants; Migration; Sex Role; Social Attit[illegible] *Social Experience; Social Isolation; Social Li[illegible] Wages
IDENTIFIERS *Colombians

ABSTRACT

This paper presents research on the immigration, employment, familial, and social experiences of Colombian women in New York City. The data discussed are derived from both a literature review and extensive interviews with Colombian women residing in the city during recent years. It is hypothesized that Colombian women's perceptions of their actual conditions, as well as their consciousness and social awareness, are mediated and limited by their past experiences in Colombia. It is further argued tht differences in income between the two countries, the greater restriction of the husband to the family sphere in the United States, and less direct family repression of women's behavior (so long as they are single or separated) contribute to these women's positive evaluation of migration. Anecdotal as well as statistical data are given on marital status, income, legal immigrant status, and employment level, among the population studied. Appended to the paper are the texts of interviews with several women. (GC)

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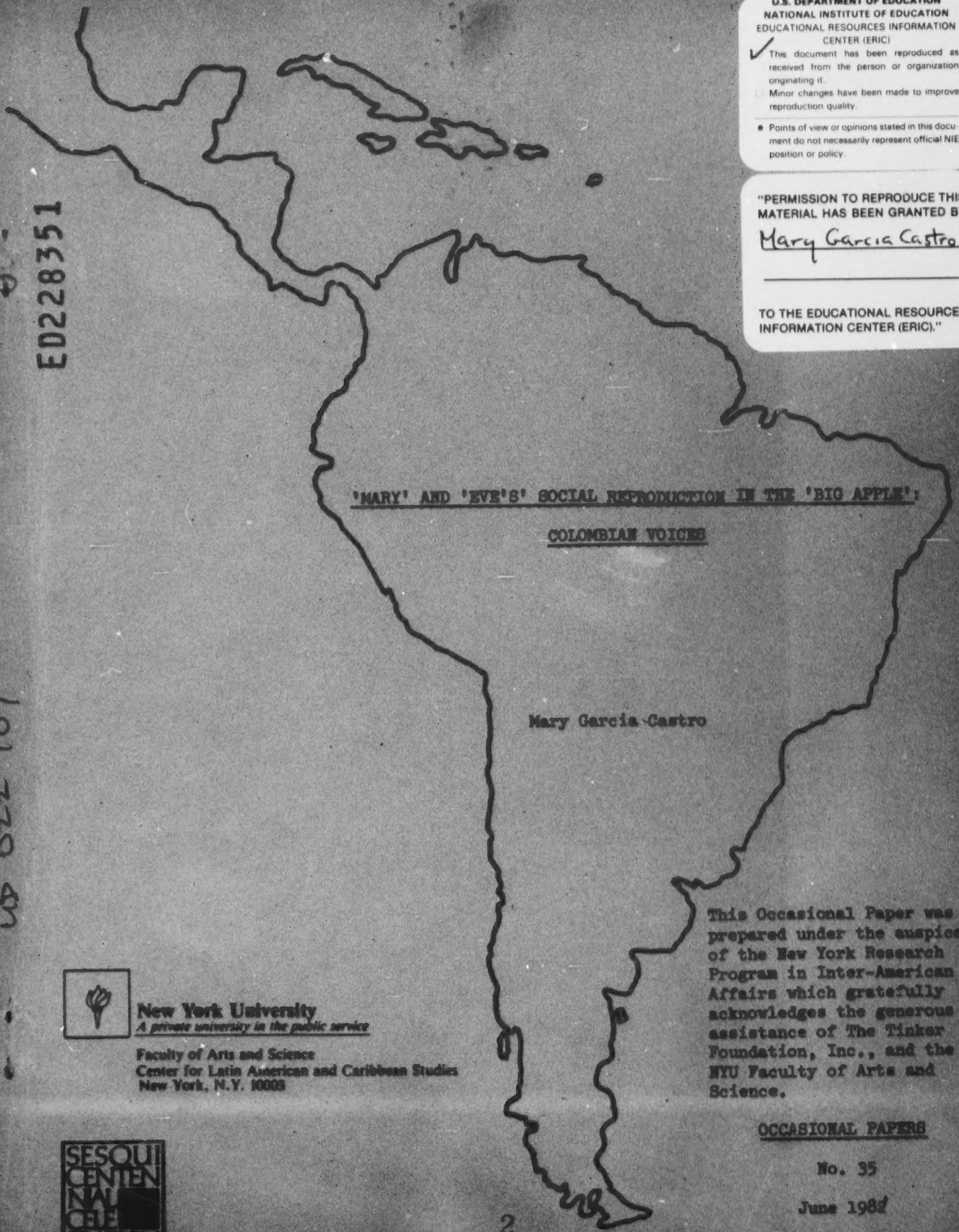

'MARY' AND 'EVE'S' SOCIAL REPRODUCTION IN THE 'BIG APPLE':

COLOMBIAN VOICES

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This Occasional Paper was prepared under the auspices of the New York Research Program in Inter-American Affairs which gratefully acknowledges the generous assistance of The Tinker Foundation, Inc., and the NYU Faculty of Arts and Science.

OCCASIONAL PAPERS

No. 35

June 1982

SESQUICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

"'Mary' and 'Eve's' Social Reproduction in the 'Big Apple': Colombian Voices"

by
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Presented at the Conference on
"Colombians and Dominicans in New York:
Life Strategies in the Household and at Work"

Sponsored by the
New York Research Program in Inter-American Affairs
at New York University on June 4, 1982

This paper was written with the support of two institutions and many different people. The institutional facilities provided by the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies (CLACS) of New York University, where I held the status of Visiting Scholar, and the support of the Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico, Ministry of Planning, of the government of Brazil deserve special reference.

At CLACS I am especially indebted to the director, Christopher Mitchell, and his Assistant, Deborah Truhan, who was also in charge of the editing process and of helping me establish networks, so important to a migrant in the "Big Apple." (Debbie also collaborated with me for a month, putting this paper into readable English!) Rose Diaz gave freely of her secretarial services and encouragement.

Laura Engler-Perez (Research Assistant) , Eduardo Silva and Rosa Garcia (Graduate Assistants) collaborated in the organization of the base material.

Discussions with participants in the New York Research Program were important to the development and refinement of my ideas. To Patricia Pessar (Research Fellow), my thanks for her comments on the original project. Conversations with Nancy Clark and Catherine Benamou (Research Assistants) led to the development of further topics. Constance Sutton, of the NYU Department of Anthropology, offered a critique of the original project whilch helped me reorient the methodology of my analysis, thereby enriching it.

This project is closely interrelated with Fernando Urrea's study, "Life Strategies and the Labor Market: New York City in the 1970s." Indeed, this paper was originally conceived as a chapter of this study, and his collaboration was basic to the elaboration of this study.

Douglas Gurak, of Fordham University's Hispanic Research Center, provided us access to questionnaires administered by his staff in Queens. SPSS data processing of these data was facilitated by George Sharrard of the NYU Computer Center.

Thanks to these people and many others with whom the research was discussed--friends and colleagues of the "Women and Development" study group; classmates in "Class and Gender," taught by Lourdes Beneria at the New School of Social Research; classmates in "Feminist Thought," taught by Marilyn Young of the NYU Department of History; and those of "Sociology of the Life Course," taught by Kathleen Gerson, of the NYU Department of Sociology.

I consider the Colombian women I interviewed to be co-authors of this paper. They made many observations which are included here. Although they were active participants, they are not responsible for my inferences. Any errors are mine.

> "A major, perhaps the major, tool of feminist revolt is a comprehensive understanding of the way in which women 'internalize their own oppression.' The logic is that structures which oppress women cannot be altered unless there is a prior awareness among women of the need for change...This awareness is most needed in the case of the housewife, and it is precisely the failure to develop it which was negated or reduced the appeal of the movement in this area" (Oakley, 1974: 195).

TO: COLOMBIAN WOMEN IN COLOMBIA, COLOMBIAN WOMEN IN NEW YORK, AND FEMINIST RESEARCHERS AND ACTIVISTS. FOR OUR SEARCH...

General Questions and the Study's Organization

There is a growing literature on immigration. Most authors consider migration as a process of labor force mobility or, as Gaudemar (1978) claims, a natural component of the sale of the labor force in capital accumulation with migrants' social realization as that of "persons of capital." It must be realized that migrants are social beings with flesh, minds, cultures, and not just passive actors as is suggested by the partial manipulation of such macro categories as class, capital, international division of labor, etc. There are many studies which explain how capital accumulation is based on labor force exploitation and how Hispanic international migration to the U.S. is part of the reproduction of colonial relations. Also, for an understanding of the logic of the internal market, the segmentation of the labor force theory is particularly pertinent. (See Portes, 1979, 1981; Sassen-Koob, 1981; and Singer, 1973, among others.)[2]

These aforementioned approaches are adopted here as a structural framework for the migration question, but other preoccupations stimulated me to design an exploratory study on Colombian women migrants:

1. How do women react to and participate in a given structural situation?
2. What is the specificity of women's participation in the migratory process?
3. Reproduction is understood to be related to a labor force which circulates in a "sex-gender system"[3] supported by objective situations, cultural arrangements, and ideologies -- interdependent, but with a certain degree of autonomy (Althusser, in Kuhn and Wolpe, 1978).

Besides life conditions or working relations, this analysis will be concerned with ideologies and levels of consciousness. Women's social reproduction will be discussed at a most immediate level.

1. their "individual consumption," one component of Marx's "labor force reproduction"[4]
2. their contributions to the daily reproduction of the family's members and their participation in the production of goods, and
3. the reproduction of their identity as women of a certain social segment -- their daily lives in terms of men-women relations, sexuality, mothering and childbearing, and their perceptions of these aspects of their lives.

This paper is more concerned with aspects of the first and third points above. I do not believe that the data collected are sufficient for a good discussion of the second point, and even about the others, I have more hypotheses than conclusions.

The Althusserian reflexion that ideology should be understood not as a reflection of reality but as an idealization with existential bases in a lived reality has been influencing my thoughts about women's types of consciousness (Garcia Castro, 1979b, 1980, 1982), but I should clarify that now, the "bottom line" of these preoccupations, my own "values premises" on these themes, is influenced by Gramsci's and Rowbotham's perspectives: ideologies are linked to domination and not to an imaginary process. although inviduals are not passive objects in these processes (Rouanet, 1978; Gramsci, 1977; Rowbotham, 1977).

Empirically, many of the aforementioned premises will not be fully demonstrated or argued here. They are mentioned just to "show my weapons." I will, however, use some general concerns and specific preoccupations to deal with a specific migratory stream, Colombian women's migration to New York, or, more precisely, Colombian women living in Queens in 1981.

This report echoes many voices, mine and those of the women migrants I interviewed. I agree with the statement that "merely because capital would like to treat workers as robots, it doesn't mean that they are robots" (Willis, 1979: 186). Along this line of thinking, I request that women migrants be heard.

To give women a voice or to take women "from their invisibility" is a concern of the feminist researcher (Oakley, 1974; Roberts, 1981). This means going beyond the social science prescription for distant, neutral, unbiased interviews and unemotional analysis.My interviews departed from a list of subjects for discussion which was many times forgotten. We had discussions and disagreements. Some of the women I interviewed are today personal friends, and many times I just translate their "common sense logic" into my legitimated academic discourse.

"One fundamental characteristic of common sense knowledge is that it is an incongruent, incoherent, and fragmentary conception according to the social and cultural situation of the masses, since that knowledge is the philosophy of the masses"(Gramsci, 1977: 119; author's translation). Of course there are some well-known risks with this approach: moving from the Manicheism of general abstract categories to the individual's perception of motivations as self-contained; or conceiving culture as independent from its material ground; or being trapped in the naive and guilty behavior of some anthropologists who are satisfied with presenting testimonies without discussions of their social conditionings.

I have been trying to distance myself from these positions, but indeed, discussing the formation of consciousness in terms of a structural approach is so complex and new, as an intellectual effort, that I feel that sometimes I cannot do more than document experiences and perceptions.

> "It is a utopian dream of fossilized intellectuals to believe that one type of world view can be destroyed by rational critics" (Gramsci, 1977: 267; author's translation).

The discussion of levels of consciousness will be articulated with consideration of three basic structures which, from my point of view, are intimately related with each other -- class, sex, and nationality or ethnicity. The way a migrant moves in these structures is basic to the configuration of his or her identity.

Concepts such as "class consciousness," "gender consciousness," and "ethnic or national identity" are cutting edges. The discussion here is on the levels or types of consciousness, and not just class consciousness. Sex is conceived as a social category, and Western capitalist societies are "gender oriented" in different forms. On the

other hand, ethnicity in American society is related to the way one sees oneself, the way others perceive us, and our economic "place." So women and migrants are categories to be qualified according to elements of the social relations in which they are embedded. These categories by themselves do not explain much, and to qualify them is not an easy task.

It is common to refer to women as being more family oriented[6] and to say that in women's identity and consciousness, family, children, and affective relations are basic structures (Safa, 1976; Sokoloff, 1981; Garcia Castro, 1982). But this statement does not allow the inference that women are not class-oriented, since those structures are historically shaped.[7] If their patriarchal components allow some interclass or vertical identity among women, their daily routines are realized in specific class situations, and their ideological perceptions of their lives as women are structured according to class specificities. In summary, when I criticize the term "class consciousness," and more vehemently, the concept of "false consciousness"[8], this criticism involves the feminist observation that class itself is not a sufficient concept, although it is necessary, to explain women's realities. (See Sokoloff, 1981; Beneria, 1981; Eisenstein, 1979; and other authors of the Marxist and socialist feminist current.)

In the first analytical chapter of this study, some reference is made to economic and cultural patterns specifically concerning women in Colombia. There is the implicit position that existence and consciousness are of course closely linked, but existence means the whole spectrum of experiences in one's life history, and not just the position at one moment in time, such as the situation of Colombian women in the host society, or in this case the "Big Apple" (New York City). This orientation is also more closely related to the concept of migration as a process, not just caused by "push" and "pull" factors, but by their combination and the particular perceptions of them by the actors, or actresses in our case (See Singer, 1973). The following analytical chapters are related to Colombian women in New York, their positions in terms of the themes discussed in this paper, and the ways some of these women see themselves.

It is a common sense assumption that in a patriarchal culture, the family, mothering, and affective relations are some of the principal references for women, so any discussion of women's conditions needs a holistic approach (Safa, 1976; Nash, 1976). To better understand women's working conditions, one must go beyond the factories' or sweat shops' walls. One must open the door and go into the family. This unit, seen as the primary reference group and formed chiefly, but not necessarily, by kinship relations, sometimes overlaps with the concept of the household which is more oriented to economic linkages. (On the economicist reductionism of the concept of household, see Beneria, 1981).

Family here is understood as a group in which members are related by consanguinity and/or legal or legitimated contract by habit or affective relations. In this institution, the economic dependence of some members on others, or mutual dependence, may not necessarily continue when reference is not to the residential family, or to that type in which all members live together. But family is not just a type of relation or a type of coexistence; it is also a way of thinking about reality. (For a more elaborated discussion, see Duhran, 1979.)

Family is a complex and controversial subject -- and not only theoretically -- so I realize that I make some over-simplifications in dealing with it, without further discussion. For my purposes, even if my analysis does not follow "pari passu" reflections here, I will clarify that at least four considerations should be kept in mind when dealing with migrant women in familial arrangements:

1. Like all other social institutions, family is part of a given historical society, so it is not separate from its context. In the case of migrants, another "complicator" is added: the fact that the social context does not overlap neatly on a geographical, physical place. Once more some abstraction is needed, so one must keep in mind the combination of situations here, in the host society and there, in the place or places of previous experience.

2. Like all institutions, the family has some degree of autonomy. Along this line is the commonly developed view of family as a "survival strategy" (Jelin and Feijó, 1980) or as a unit in which members create forms of facing outside constraints. Authors generally use the concept of household -- people living together and sharing economic responsibilities. As discussed in Urrea's study (1982) of Colombian migrant families residing in New York, maintenance and economic linkages with the family in the place of origin are heavily supported by the work of more than one family member. He also observes that households where women are the only breadwinners are those with the least income. Similar findings are presented by every study on female heads of household. (See findings and comments on this literature in Garcia Castro, 1982.) In part, the reproductive and productive burden, or the lack of other members to share these responsibilities, is used as an explanation of this common status of women-headed families.

3. Opening the door of the "home sweet home" leads us a step ahead, allowing feminist reflections which deny the lyric vision of the family as a place of harmony, where all members give each other a hand and together they face 'the capital." Girls and boys, mothers and fathers, as well as other females and males, both young and old, have both common and different interests and power. Therefore, both internal and external alliances and contradictions form the basis of the family's dynamics (Hartmann, 1981).

4. The family is not just an institutional arrangement but an ideology (Thorne, 1982), a way of idealizing relations and explaining situations. Family is not restricted to a unique arrangement, to the family institution itself. This particularly holds true for women. The great majority of them are socialized by their parents or other agents to marry, to live in monogamic and heterosexual patterns, to be mothers of their own children, of "their men," and even of others, to be docile, to be in charge directly or indirectly (if there are domestic workers, "muchachas") of the housework, to be affectionate, and to be happy with these characterizations. Schmukler (1982), Sokoloff (1981), and Akolontai (1972)[9] point out that it is not a historical accident that bourgeois consolidation saw the marriage contract come to be embedded in and blessed by the romantic love myth. "What a shame. She had to marry a man just to get her 'green card.' She never wrote her family about it." (Tulia) Even when women rebel against those stereotypes, it does not change the way society sees them, or the way they are seen in the workplace.

So familial relations and orientations, and not just the "family" should be discussed in women's studies. This elaboration is put straightforwardly by Estela, one of the Colombian women interviewed. When I asked her if she did not go out, amuse herself, or move with more freedom here than in Bogotá, since she is divorced and far from the eyes of her family and her community, she replied, "We /she and her sister, Rosita, another interviewee/ are not used to going out, to having male friends. We[10] haven't changed much. Rosita and I have each other, and we live a pretty routine life."

In another conversation, she mentioned, "We were brought up to be serious women, and I have to be a good example for my children /adults, living in Bogotá/...I don't

want them to think badly of me...I never told them I had to get married to get my residence." /She never had a marital relationship with the man she paid to be her husband./

Thus we see that a woman may leave a specific family arrangement, but she carries with her notions and behaviors concerning families and herself in order to be considered "a person of family," a common expression in Latin America. Naturally these factors are not deterministic ones, but they must be considered, and many studies on relations between migration and changes in personal lives do not consider that "social space" does not necessarily change with change of "physical and economic space."

But Estela is 51 years old,[11] and she lived the greater part of her life in a typical middle class family in Bogotá, with an additional component: although in 1973 19.1% of Colombian women between the ages of 35 and 44 were in the paid labor force (DNP, 1980), until she came to the U.S., Estela had never worked in exchange for money. She was a housewife and the mother of three children. She used to have a "muchacha." She went to mass every Sunday. Then she came to New York, just for a few months, to earn enough money to pay off a car she bought in Bogotá. But she has been in New York for about eight years. When she found out that her husband, who had stayed in Bogotá, had "got another woman," she decided to stay here. According to her, she never looked for a job in Bogotá because, with her lack of skills, the available opportunities were not suitable for a person of "her position."

Other women, with other backgrounds, see their lives differently. And these differences are the basis upon which this analysis has been organized.

Women, migration, and family are categories without comprehensive values, if there is no reference to the social relations in which their components are involved. Therefore my units of analysis are Colombian women migrants in different types of families. The notion of position in the family cycle is basic for these differentiations among women. The number of children, their ages, the family composition by sex and age, all of these factors allow different strategies, e.g. mothers with small children in families without other women face probably more difficulties in articulating their participation in the labor market with their household "duties." According to my analysis, young women alone and mature women living in "complete" nuclear families tend to present different perceptions of their migratory experiences. Women's migration and their levels of consciousness form the core of this study.

Women's migration is increasing at both the internal and international levels (Chaney, 1980b; Garcia Castro, 1979b). In spite of this increase in migration and the growth of migrant women in the labor market, there are few studies on this subject which are principally concerned with the control of sex and race in reference to specific groups of Latin American migrants in the United States. As Chaney has stated, "In spite of the special needs of migrant women, most development agencies have not confronted migration, neither as a problem requiring careful study nor as a programmatic concern" (Chaney, 1980b: 28).

There are only a few previous studies on the Colombian migration stream to New York. Many have been gathered in a book (Cardona et al., 1980). Particularly in the case of women, these point out: first, an increase in female participation in this stream, as well as some selectivity with respect to original socio-economic characteristics; second, the evaluation of the mobility process of women is said to be distinct from that of men, in that many Colombian migrant women view their migration to New York in a positive light. Chaney refers to a decrease of "macho" manifestations and

an increase in the husband's participation in the household in the Colombian case. Stuart, referring to Hispanic women in general, argues to the contrary, that many families are broken apart after migration, and with women's entrance into the labor force. Cardona's study points out that it was possible, in New York, for women to save some money and send it to family members in Colombia, to bring some of these members here and to achieve some degree of autonomy. Some long term implications of these facts will be discusses, such as the "double day," or double burden, for married women. As stated by different interviewees, Colombian husbands in New York indeed do help more with housework than they did in Colombia. "There, family and friends would reproach him. Here we are alone;" or because "we both need to work; he doesn't like it very much, but I have to go to work, and so he has to help me more; my mother is not with us anymore." But generally the husband's participation is in the form of "helping his wife," rather than feeling responsible for certain tasks in the home, and child-rearing is still basically a woman's task.

Another point which should be investigated is the wastage of the labor force. In talking with Colombian women migrants, observing their lives as well as those of Colombian men, one notes that migration is positively evaluated by its results in "getting some money" and better consumption patterns. But these advantages are also clearly correlated and perceived as depending on hard work and less "free time" (for amusement, friends, going out, other activities, etc.).

Inferences about changes of consciousness, as workers and as women, or as women workers brought about by a newly found economic independence is a complex road. In the case of women's internal migration in Colombia, in another study I pointed out that Colombian women were stimulated to migrate not just by a lack of jobs but also as an escape from familial and social oppression of their personal lives and sexuality. This escape is used to mediate their critical evaluation about their present situation in the new area (Garcia Castro, 1979b).

This idea of a new freedom was found to a great extent in this project, particularly when women migrate alone. But it was also observed that in these cases, it was not migration itself that had permitted a more critical vision of the family relationship. Migration was tried in the context of criticism of those relations. In addition, as single or separated women are distancing themselves from a family stereotype or paradigm, they seem to be more aware and critical of their position in society -- including their position as workers, and of the different components and constraints on the original goal of being free and autonomous. Naturally, living in a certain type of family relationship or having spent the greater part of their lives in a typical Colombian family structure, with strong components of subordination, asymmetrical power relations, and the traditional ascription of women to home non-paid labor,[12] it is harder to free themselves from the family as an ideology. For married women, especially if they are mothers, migration is commonly evaluated in terms of gains for the family.

The specificity of migrant women in the host society, New York, and its labor market, is the subject of a separate chapter below. It is examined according to these basic assumptions: there is internal differentiation in the so-called "segmented market" (Piore, 1980). Colombian women are recruited in a particular way and have lower positions than Colombian men in the labor market[13] because of a combination of factors. These refer to the organization of the market, as well as to women's roles in the reproductive sphere--both biologically and in the daily repositioning of the family labor force in the household. Another aspect that reinforces their segregation concerns their ideological frame of reference regarding their identities as women. Many authors have suggested that migrant women are changing their

family relations and cultural patterns. (For different points of view, see Stuart, 1981; Chaney, 1980a; Guhleman and Tienda, 1981; and Prieto, 1977.) How do Colombian women express themselves about this? Could these changes be characterized as related to levels of consciousness, and if so, to what levels?

Some authors refer to the same level of consciousness with the following terms: "intuitive" (Lenin, cited by Althusser in Kuhn and Wolpe, 1978); "real" (Goldmann, 1978); and "cognitive stage" (Leggett, cited in Safa, 1976). With some simplification, and without considering each author's context, this same level of consciousness could be understood as the way reality is perceived. This perception could be a critical or acritical one, but commonly, for these authors, this level of consciousness would not stimulate changes of the perceived reality, even in the personal sphere.

Another common level of consciousness often referred to is that of social consciousness. Structural changes or stimuli for change are related to this one. For some Marxists, the emphasis would be class in the formation of this type of consciousness; for some radical feminists, sex; for some materialist feminists, class and sex, or patriarchal oppression and capitalist exploitation are basic integrated references. This is another complex theme which is only mentioned in this study. In the discussion of linkages and passages from real to social consciousness, Goldmann provides another complex and useful concept-- the Marxist one of "possible consciousness." This concept is related to concern with the question of up to what point people could in actual conditions change their way of thinking, and how these changes stimulate their participation in social transformations. According to Goldman,

> "Every group tends, de facto, to know reality in some way, but its knowledge cannot go beyond a maximum limit compatible with its existence...
>
> "To be scientific, the sociologist should not ask him/herself what a certain member of a social group thinks today about a refrigerator and comfort, about marriage and sexual life, but rather what the level of consciousness is within which this or that group of men /and, I add, women[14]/ can, without modifying his/her structure, vary his/her way of thinking about all these problems, and in sum, what are the limits which his/her consciousness of reality cannot go beyond, without previously undergoing a profound social transformation?" (Goldmann, 1978:43, 49; author's translation).

My analysis develops along the following lines. Colombian women migrants' levels of consciousness regarding their actual situation in the labor market and in the family are formed by the way they live and have lived, their experiences as women, as Hispanics in an American society, and as members of determined socio-economic classes. A similar orientation comes out of Safa's study of Puerto Rican women. According to Safa,

> "Sexual subordination must be taken into account along with class oppression in assessing the potential for the development of class consciousness among working class women in Latin America" (Safa, 1976: 80).

I must add, however, that Safa's observation should not be applied only to women in Latin America, since in some ways their positions as "colonialized people" or as being from "peripheral" political economies are reproduced here (Chaney, 1980a; and Portes /oral comments regarding Urrea, 1982/.)

I must mention that I am limited in this paper to the identification of levels of consciousness, without necessarily legitimate a priori definite levels. Also,

"social consciousness" or what Rowbotham calls "female consciousness" in not my prime concern in analytical terms, although this concern is one of the basic stimuli of my studies on women. My ultimate concern is with the identification of constraints to reaching that level of consciousness. As Rowbotham states,

> "I do not believe that women or men are determined either by anatomy or economics, though I do think both contribute to a definition of what we can be and what we have to struggle to go beyond. An emergent female consciousness is part of the specific sexual and social conjuncture, which it seeks to control and transform. But its very formation serves to change its own situation" (Rowbotham, 1977: x).

II. Methodological Considerations and Procedures

My analyses are based on survey data and in-depth interviews[14]. Survey data were collected by the Hispanic Research Center, Fordham University, under the direction of Douglas Gurak, and details about the sampling techniques are available from his project (1981). This paper focuses on the sub-sample of Colombians living in Queens in December, 1981[15], and interviews were also conducted with women living in different areas of Queens. This phase of the project lasted until March, 1982.

From the large range of questions in Dr. Gurak's questionnaire, I selected just some which were explored in order to outline Colombian migrant women's positions in New York. (See Table 2, Chapter 4.)

Interviews with twelve women living in different areas of the borough of Queens were carried out over a five-month period. I developed close friendships with some of these women, and I've been following, and in certain ways participating in, their lives. With others, contacts were disrupted and just one interview was completed[16]. This was more related to our life styles and difficult schedules than to any other factor.

Contacts were established with the help of Colombian friends living in Queens and by some of the interviewees suggesting other people. Urrea interviewed four Colombian men, but the findings are not used here in a systematic way. We did not structure these interviews for a discussion of different views of reality according to sex, a theme which deserves research, but which goes beyond our purposes here.

These interviews are the basis of my discussion and inferences about consciousness levels and social relations. Based on these interviews, I wrote about women's life histories in Colombia and their own evaluations of their actual conditions, intra-familial relations, and how their legal situation (having or not having the "green card") affects their lives. This last factor, the legal status of migrants, was not intentionally searched for at the beginning of our research. It surfaced during the interviews and as a result of discussions with researchers experienced in studying Hispanics in New York.[17] It turned out that the majority of these women were undocumented, and those who were not, had been at some stage of their migration. They themselves seemed very interested in talking about their experiences as "illegals."

In accordance with standard procedures, I elaborated an interview guide with Urrea's collaboration. But this was soon forgotten. Instead, interviews were conducted as friendly chats. Some of these are recorded. I would give my own opinions, to occasionally disagree with them, so that these interviews were not neutral, distant, or hierarchical (Oakley, 1974; Roberts, 1981). At the beginning of our initial conversations, they were often somewhat apprehensive, and many of these first

meetings were difficult to arrange. Some women were worried because they were undocumented; others, beause I was a stranger; others because "you cannot trust people here" (especially if the unknown person is also a Colombian)[18]. A majority of these women found it hard to make appointments because they were always very busy (working outside or inside the home).

After the first interview, or after talking for a few hours, they seemed eager to talk about their lives. A common comment was that due to the heavy work load (most worked either as service workers or as blue collar workers in the garment industry), distance, weather, and a generalized "mistrust" they used to feel very alone, without friends. Even in the workplace, they did not often make friends (these points will be discussed in a later chapter). Because of this feeling of isolation, they were always eager to talk about themselves to a sympathetic listener.

Figure 1 details their general characteristics in terms of age, time of residence in New York, marital situation, previous occupations in Colombia, present occupation, and income. Although for methodological reasons I cannot make generalizations based on this sample, in relationship to those indicators found in the Fordham sub-sample, they present similar characteristics.

Notice should be given to the inconsistencies between my general aim of using a holistic approach, with emphasis on levels of consciousness, and the realities which limited me. I was given access to an extensive survey with a wide variety of questions on many different subjects, but which was not elaborated by me, and so it was limited for some of my purposes. There are no data on housework tasks, the sexual division of labor at home, the sexual division of power at home -- i.e., who controls the money and how it is used -- use of urban services such as day care, use of time, consumption patterns, etc. In addition, the entire study was developed during a six-month period, with limited resources, which did not allow a truly in-depth study.[19]

As a result, this analysis is an exploratory one, with the intention of setting hypotheses and presenting discussions. The interviews are considered to be impressionistic ones, and so a larger research project based on feminist activist observation is needed to deal with and about different groups of Hispanic women in New York. Along this same line, another frustrating dilemma I cannot resolve now is how these findings can be returned to the Colombian women of New York, in order to help them further their own efforts at improving their lives.

III. Where Colombian Women Come From

According to the CCRP study (Cardona et al, 1980), there is information by sex for the Colombian stream to the U.S. only from 1960 onward. Since that time, the sex ratio has been more favorable to women.[20] Urrea offers the following figures on the actual volume of these migrants.

> "New York City has received about 36% of the Colombian migrants legally admitted to the U.S. during the years 1966-1979 (CCRP, 1980, for 1966-1976)...Within New York City, the Colombian immigrant population has traditionally been concentrated in the borough of Queens (Chaney, 1980a), and according to the calculations of the Department of City Planning of the City of New York, between 60% and 65% of the city's Colombian population was concentrated in this borough (Urrea, 1982: Ch. 2).

For 1980, he estimates that the Colombian population in Queens is 32-42,000; in New York, 50-65,000; and in the U.S. as a whole, 125-160,000.

Figure 1: General Characteristics of Interviewees, Colombian Women Living in Queens

Identification (Fictitious names)	Marital + Housing Situation	Education Level + where attended
1. María Fernández	lives with American boy friend (6 months)	Undergraduate education (Colombia)
2. Rosita	widowed (Colombia); married American; lives with husband and one of her sons	Junior High School (Colombia)
3. Estela (Rosita's sister)	divorced (Colombia); ex-husband + children in Colombia; woman roommate	Junior High School (Colombia)
4. Mercedes	separated (Colombia); lives with daughter and friends (7 Colombians)	Primary (Colombia)
5. Helena (Mercedes' daughter)	single (see Mercedes)	Junior High School (Colombia)
6. Tulia	married (18 years); lives with husband; children (18 + older) in Colombia	Primary (Colombia)
7. María Ana	married (12 years); lives with husband + 2 children (11 + 9 years old)	Senior High School + specialization-nursery;
8. Lina	single; lives with mother, sister + nephew	Junior High School (completing in USA)
9. Eve	single; lives with older sister + younger brother	Incomplete undergraduate-Social Service (Colombia)
10. Marina	single; lives with parents + brothers	High School (finishing) (USA)
11. Blanca*	divorced here; she + ex-husband (Nanias) separated in Colombia; they live together here as instrumental arrangement; 1 son + a friend live with them	Primary (Colombia)
12. Miriam*	single; lives with friends (see Mercedes)	Senior High School-Commerce (Colombia)
13. Julio* (Ema's son)	single; lives with brothers	Undergraduate (finishing) (USA)
14. Giovanni* (Blanca's son)	single (see Blanca)	Senior High School-Bilingual Program (USA)
15. Nanias* (Blanca's ex-husband)	divorced (see Blanca)	Senior High School-Accountant (Colombia)
16. Gildardo*(Blanca's family friend)	married; wife + children in Colombia (see Blanca)	Primary (Colombia)

*These interviews were done by Fernando Urrea in accordance with an interview guide which

1982

Residence in USA	Documentation	Age	Occupation (Colombia)	Present Job + Time Employed	Net Average Earnings/Week
2 years	undocumented	28	teacher	worker-garment (2 months)	140.00
16 years	resident (fictitious marriage)	49	worker-garment	worker-garment (10 years)	211.00
8 years	ID	51	housewife	worker-garment (4 years)	200.00
1 year	undocumented	41	worker-coffee industry	worker-garment (3 months)	140.00
1 year	undocumented	18	student	worker-doll factory (laid off)	115.00
12 years	undocumented	40	housewife	worker-garment (3 months)	140.00
4 years	resident (child born in US)	32	social service-nurse	part-time worker-garment (2 months)	120.00
2 years	undocumented	21	student	domestic worker (day) different homes	150.00
2 years	undocumented	25	social service-research ass't	worker-apprentice diamond cutter (6 mo.)	150.00
1 year	undocumented	18	student	student	------
3 years	resident (fictitious marriage)	50	public service-clerical work	domestic worker (day) different homes	110.00
1 year	undocumented	22	commerce-sales	worker-garment (laid off)	115.00
8 years	resident	22	student	student; part-time services (not working)	------
2 years	resident	18	student	dish-washer-restaurant (6 months)	115.00
4 years (several entrances)	undocumented	43	public service-accountant	cleaning company (permanent) (3 years)	311.00
4 years (several entrances)	undocumented	46	commerce-sales	cleaning company (substitute)	-------

we designed.

The majority of men and women (survey data) was born or lived for a long time in one of the four principal cities of Colombia.[21] When a migration study's perspective is the notion of labor force mobility, it is necessary to make broader qualifications in terms of the social organization of production and the cultural patterns of micro zones. Since this information is not at my disposal, I must first describe more thoroughly the migratory selectivity, or describe who the women who came were. Colombia are, so that a somewhat more accurate discussion of their social environment at origin can be held.

Data suggest that migrants do not necessarily come from the poorest areas of the country, ie. the rural zones or smaller cities. This is a feature that differentiates internal from international migration, since a great portion of the rural-urban stream in Latin America is composed of the poor strata (although not the poorest ones). (See Badillo et al., 1979; Garcia Castro, 1979a, 1979b; Urrea, 1979.)

In considering the occupations in which Colombian migrants worked longest in Colombia, more similarities than differences between men and women were found. However, according to the Fordham survey, the following dissimilarities were noticed:

1. a higher concentration of secretaries among women (9.7%)[22] which is compensated for by a similar concentration of men in the category "other clerical workers" (10%);
2. a higher proportion of employees and skilled blue collar workers among men;
3. among women, 20.4% were housewives before coming; indeed, women predominated in that category, which was formally considered as the "non-economically active population" (housewives and students) - 63%;
4. women predominated in commerce activities - 44.2%;
5. men predominated in industry - 23%.

In the CCRP study in 1975, the weight of middle class individuals was stressed. The study called attention to the cases of secretaries and school teachers who migrated by saying they were domestic servants. The study also documented the case of nurses who migrate without changing occupations. Within our sample, few Colombian nurses were found, perhaps reflecting the presumption that more recent streams were composed of a higher presence of lower middle class people.[23]

Indeed, the discussion of the Colombian background should be elaborated with less abstraction than is suggested by terms such as "Colombian economy," "Colombian culture," and "middle class," and rather by using specific historical references. Since Colombia is a country with a high degree of internal social inequalities, regional imbalances, and interactions of different cultural heritages, there is some over-simplification when those abstract terms are used.

> "The structure of Colombian society is strongly based on traditions inherited from 16th century Spain and is stratified with well-defined class membership, pronounced status differences and limited vertical social mobility...(most recently) there was the continuing flow of rural migrants to the cities, the emergence of new class consciousness among campesinos (peasants), the middle class and other new urban social groups...The structure of society, intellectual activity, and the character of the economy clearly reflected patterns established centuries earlier...basic divisions between the elite and the balance of the population were comparable to those established in colonial times...The influence of Hispanic culture and the Roman Catholic Church was evident in literature, in law and administration and in the daily lives of the people" (Weil, 1970: 20, 107).

According to a study of unemployment and poverty (empleo y pobreza) developed by the University of Los Andes in 1977, about 50% of the families in four principal Colombian cities generated household incomes insufficient for covering the minimal costs of nutrition (1,340 Colombian pesos)(Rey de Marulanda y Ayala, 1979, cited in Garcia Castro, 1982). In 1977, in these same four cities, about 42% of the economically active women (census definition)[24] were in the so-called informal, or non-protected, sector; among men, 35.1% were in that same sector. A Colombian Government report makes the following analysis of the relationship between economic growth and labor force absorption.

> "The labor force offer has surpassed the demand. The results are unemployment indexes of 13.5%, 11.4% and 16.3% respectively, for each census year (1951, 1964, and 1973)...In the period 1964-1973, although the annual average growth of the Gross Domestic Product was 5.9% higher than that registered for the previous period, unemployment was five times higher in relation to the previous census period (1951-1964), when unemployment was 1.1%" (DNP-UPG, 1980: 59; author's translation).

Recently, along with their discussions of poverty issues, Colombian economists have been focusing their attention on another issue, the so-called "middle class proletarianization:"

> "In 1979, about 37% of professionals and technicians received earnings inferior to 8,500 Colombian pesos monthly, so they were below what should be considered adequate remuneration for even a worker's family...
>
> "When a dynamic perspective is adopted, considering the time, it is clear that beyond not being able to maintain its status, the middle class is also proletarianizing itself. Indeed, between 1976 and 1979, the proportion of the population in the middle class decreased from 19% to 16%. In that period there was an increase of almost 80% in the number of persons who did not earn the minimum income (by governmental standards) necessary for supporting a worker's family in Colombia...employers' income in the past decade suffered a deterioration twice that of the deterioration suffered by workers' income" (Pinzano, Samper in Garcia Castro, 1981).

So it would seem that Colombian international migration is highly associated with this process of "proletarianization." Indeed, in the interviews there are constant references to economic problems faced in Colombia, particularly those caused by monetary or salary devaluations.[25] "Here money can buy more."

Labeling Colombian migrants as a "lower middle class" is a relative evaluation. In every historical period, the sale of the labor force faces different social situations related to their process of mobility. One must stress that more recent streams of migrants were facing changes in Colombian society according to their class situation: proletarianization, women's broader knowledge of their possibilities and constraints, and political repression with wide-ranging consequences such as repercussions in the educational system. On the other hand, it cannot be forgotten that the goal of a "consumer society" is part of the ideology of the middle class. The common expression, "I came to get money," is implicitly consumption oriented: money is a way to gain a determined standard of living.

When these women spoke about their lives, their experiences in Colombia were commonly compared with their expectations about and experiences in New York. Since the majority of people interviewed (sample survey and direct ones) already had relatives here before their own arrival, New York was already "known," but in an idealized way.

For some it was a land of opportunities for amusement, work, abundance, and even, as it was for Lina, "a kind of Disneyworld." But in a certain way, beyond their expectations of a better life here, it was their critical perspective on the situation in Colombia which pushed them out.

Demographic and sociological studies in Colombia have been documenting women's decreasing fertility rates, as well as their increasing participation in post-secondary educational institutions and in the labor force (DNP-UPG, 1980). Some part of their increasing participation in the labor force is attributed to newly created white collar and some service sector openings. From 1970 to 1978, there was an increase of women's participation in the so-called "modern sectors," chiefly in finance (from 4.2% in 1970 to 5.3% in 1978). Women in Colombia in the category of employer increased from 47.5% in 1974 to 54.9% in 1978.

While the government, in its Development Plan (Plan de Integración Nacional, DNP, 1979), saw the increase of women's participation in the labor force as an indicator of a process of "modernization" (DNP, 1980), other studies relate the increase to the pauperization or proletarianization of poor and middle class Colombian families. Thus, women go to work outside the house not necessarily because of a process of "liberation," but rather, to a great extent, because by following the patriarchal rule that men should be the sole family breadwinner, economic survival is impossible. This "rule" is being replaced by another -- men's control (at the family level) of the money women earn. In any event, the ideology persists that women's principal roles are mothering and taking care of the home. (See Estela's interview in Appendix A.)

Colombian women in New York and middle class women in Bogotá often relate their entry into the labor market with a feeling of guilt about the home situation. "I had to go to work." "I would not like to have a "muchacha." They do not put love in the housework like I do. If I did not work, things at home would run better" (Garcia Castro, 1981).

The different receptions given to Colombian men and to Colombian women as they enter the New York labor market must be discussed. This difference is the same one women encounter when they enter the Colombian market. For instance, in the urban Colombian labor market (in the four principal cities mentioned above):

> "Women who work in industry are concentrated in less capital intensive sectors which generate a lower proportion of total production and possibly are in the less dynamic sectors and those which require an artisanal type of production" (Rey de Marulanda, 1981: 16; author's translation).

In Table 1 we see that the inter-sex differential ratio is favorable to women, especially in the lowest paid, less protected, and typically patriarchal-relations-oriented jobs such as domestic service, and other traditional female jobs such as office work (secretaries, typists, clerks, etc.), sales in stores, and domiciliar workers ("artisans," within which the highest proportion of women are seamstresses). It should be observed that women are also crowded in just those occupations which can be performed at or near the home. Colombian migrant women generally have had their work experience in those occupations in which women predominate in Colombia. So before coming here, they were already in sex-segregated jobs. Salary differentials in Colombia are also pointed out in different studies (Rey de Marulanda, 1981; Garcia Castro, 1979b, 1981, 1982).

Women also face norms which "put them in their place" and shape their ideological worlds. Colombia is a social category with special characteristics and families presenting special internal organizational patterns. In each sub-culture, there are

Table 1: Occupations of Colombian Men and Women; Colombian Population in Four Principal Cities (Colombia)*, 1977; and Occupations in Colombia of Colombian Men and Women Living in Queens, New York, 1981

Occupations	Colombia-Four Cities			Queens, New York		
	Women	Men	Sex Ratio	Women	Men	Sex Ratio
1. Professional + Technical**	10.4	11.1	- 6.3	7.4	10.5	- 29.5
2. Managers + Administrators	2.5	8.6	- 70.9	13.0	15.7	- 17.2
3. Office Workers***	13.8	10.8	27.8	27.7	8.7	218.4
4. Sales Personnel	17.8	8.4	119.9	24.0	17.6	36.4
5. Owners + Managers-Service Sector	5.9	5.7	3.5	--	--	--
6. Street Vendors	17.8	8.4	119.9	--	--	--
7. Domestic Servants-Sleep-in + Day	28.5	--	--	--	--	--
8. Protection Agents	0.2	4.3	- 95.3	--	--	--
9. Direct Workers-Industry + Service	9.7	24.4	- 60.2	13.3	17.7	- 24.9
10. Artisans	5.2	3.3	57.8	9.3	17.5	- 46.9
11. Skilled workers, foremen, electricians, conductors, and mechanics	3.4	18.1	- 81.2	5.6	12.3	- 54.5
Total:	100.0	100.0				

Source: For Colombian Urban Areas, Rey de Marulanda, 1981.

* Bogotá, Cali, Medellin, and Barranquilla
** For Colombians in Urban Areas, this group also includes artists
*** For Colombians in Urban Areas, this group also includes financial agents

specific results of the interactions among the colonial heritage, eg. the Roman Catholic Church (imposed by Spain), recent Western political and economic influence, and the resistance of the pre-Colombian cultures.

In 1969 anthropologist Gutiérrez de Piñeda referred to the following sub-cultures in Colombia: 1) Andean, or American complex; 2) Santander, or neo-Hispanic; 3) Antioquian, or mountain; and 4) Negro "fluvio minero" complex.[26] Of course, in the urban areas, these sub-cultures blend with each other and with external influences. With all this complexity, I must make some simplifications when trying to present family and sex orientations in the "lower middle class."

There are rigid internal hierarchies, and the father or <u>pater familia</u> is respected, but he has many family responsibilities, including that of the economic sustenance of the family. Women are supposed to command the domestic sphere in terms of housework, children's education, etc., but generally decisions concerning investments or other expenditures are made by the "man of the house." Visits and strong relationships with other members of the extended family are cultivated. There is relatively strong vigilence by mothers over their daughters' behavior, and virginity, fidelity, and

marriage in the Roman Catholic Church are cultivated values. Fathers and husbands also work to instill these values in the female family members. (See María Fernández interview in the Appendix.) According to my Colombian research, although husbands commonly go out on the weekends with their friends, women stay home doing the housework which accumulates during the week, or they visit relatives and female friends. Not only do women have a double burden of work, but they also live surrounded by a sexual double-standard, since virginity, fidelity, and homosocial linkages (friends of the same sex) are generally values imposed only on women. Naturally, reality is more complex than these general remarks, and intra-familial and inter-generational conflicts are constantly found by sociological researchers.

As documented in the Queens interviews, for many women, migration itself was integrated with rebellion against repression, combined, to a great degree, with a search for other economic opportunities; I must emphasize that combinations of reasons, and not any single reason as distinct from the others, are mentioned by women as they explain their decision to migrate.

Cardona, Cruz, and Castaño (1980) developed a 1975 survey of people requesting visas in the American Consulate in Bogotá, and they observed that while the majority of men were married (76.5%; N- 39), there was a predominance of women who were single (53.8%; N-51) and widowed or separated (11.5%). Most of the single women were more than thirty years of age. Indeed, in 1970 in New York (census figures) among Colombian women, the proportions of single and separated women in the 35-44 year old group were higher than among women in general. Among Colombian women ages 35-44, 22.72% were single and 11.18% were separated. Among all women, 12.26% were single and 9.35% were separated (Powers and Macisco, 1980).

Chaney, in her case study of Colombians in Jackson Heights, Queens, suggests that this sub-stream (single and separated women in their 30s) might be associated with the cultural norm that women over 25 won't "find a husband." According to CCRP research, part of the sub-stream might be caused by the idea that in the U.S. the opportunities for getting married would be greater. Chaney also presents the idea that some women view migration as a way of running away from a familiar or affective problem or from social pressure. In my own interviews, I have found that this holds true for younger women as well.

I have found that Colombian women stress different factors influencing their decision to migrate and to stay according to their age, conjugal status, and other family cycle characteristics. Younger single women are more critical of their family's internal relationships and the repression of their sexuality, such as restrictions on their going out with either male or female friends, difficulties related to the Colombian educational system (economic constraints for getting into the universities, political or military repression of students, and the quality of education or its lack of relevance to the labor market), as well as problems of being hired in a society where there is a strong need to know influential people in order to get good jobs. Married women who came with their husands stress the educational opportunities for their children in the U.S. These women also seem to be more influenced by the "typical American" consumption patterns not available to their social group in Colombia. Single older women are more apt to combine economic reasons, such as better earnings, with a search for sexual and affective realization. Female heads of household frequently refer to economic considerations and to the desire for a "better education" for their children.

The Fordham survey asked "What were your principal reasons for coming to the U.S.?" and offered a set of alternative "pull" factors for the informants to choose among, since the research interest was settlement. About 32.2% of the men and 21.2%

of the women selected "looking for a job." If one notes that the majority of the survey's interviewees already had jobs in Colombia, that response should be interpreted as looking for a different kind of job, or perhaps more specifically as looking for better remuneration.

"Economic reasons" is a broad expression that hides different kinds of orientations that, as will be discussed in a later chapter, will influence the way people react to their migratory experience: "I came with my mother because we were in a bad economic situation. We had a relative here." (Helena) "I think that the fact that I had a brother living here influenced me to come. I was separated and I felt too alone." (Mercedes)

According to the survey data, of every ten women, five selected the alternative "I came to be together with my family." This reason is lower among men (10.2%), indicating a differential by sex in relation to the family orientation. But indeed, even those women presented other reasons for coming, although family orientation is higher among women than among men, with 15.7% of the women, as compared to 3.7% of men, indicating that they came just for the purpose of being together with their families.

"I wanted to travel and to know how it feels to be alone. I wanted to have some autonomy." (Miriam) Although I am more concerned with the situations of women, I do not assume that social-sexual repression victimizes just women. About 24.8% of men, the majority of them in their 20s (survey's informants) selected the reason "I came for personal reasons." Among women, the proportion was 13.3%.

"Well, I am married, and I used to have an interesting job in Colombia, as a social worker, and my husband had a good job, too, as a graphic artist. But a friend used to write me about things here, how much more money could buy, and how easy it was to get a job. She used to write us that here you have the opportunity to have more consumer goods...I talked my husband into coming...you know, it's nice to live well. Now I am working in the garment industry. It's so boring, but I have a good salary, and he also earns a lot more [her husband works in a garage]...Here children have more opportunity to study... If you are poor in Colombia, children cannot go to the university...Here if you have good grades, the government will help. One day I will continue my studies, too. My children will go to the university here...

"...In Colombia I had a reasonably good position, but I was stagnating. I wanted to have a house with everything, and I do have it now. In Colombia, it was difficult to buy a refrigerator, a record player, furniture. Here, with credit, you can buy everything at the same time. Even when you earn the minimum salary you can have a lot of things." (María Ana)

"We are two sisters and a brother. My sister came first, nine years ago. We each came for different reasons. She came because she wanted to get money. She was absorbed by this city. She loves it and doesn't think about going back. I came because of the difficulties of my life there. My older brother and I were supposed to support the family. I left the university because I could not afford to work and study, and I was so disillusioned with the university there. And I felt repressed. Almost every month the university was closed down. My brother came a week ago, and he is ready to earn money. People who come kill themselves working to get money. It is terrible. No, I intend to live here and to know this country." (Eve)

"My mother came first. I stayed with my father. She used to write us, and from the time I was fourteen I thought that this country would be so nice. I remember

movies with Mickey Mouse, do you know? Those by Walt Disney...But when I arrived, when I was 22, two years ago, oh no! Life here in Queens is so boring!...I left high school and I used to have a lot of friends there. But my father is so "straight." I was driving him crazy. I did not like him giving me orders all the time. He used to say "do this" and "don't come home late."...People in my neighborhood were so nosey. Here I don't even know my neighbors. There they used to criticize me when I came home late in my boyfriends' cars. They used to talk about me as if I were a prostitute. I was really bored, so I decided to come." (Lina)

In summary, it is natural that economic factors are at the core of the structural and immediate reasons for persons migrating. But there are many ways of understanding what the term "economic" means. "Economic" should refer to the whole structure with reference to the capitalist labor market's rules as well as the cultural ones, with emphasis on the structure of constitutive organizations, i.e., the family. When we talk about women's migration, we must refer both to patriarchal ideologies and to the specific forms this ideology takes in women's lives. The sexual division of labor and power, the codification of sexuality, and the so-called "Maryanist" ideology (inspired by the Virgin Mary -- for instance mothering and the responsibility for both children and relatives) are all strong structural components of women's migration. Even as women are found who migrate to "get free from the family," there are others who come for the purpose of family reunification, for their children's education, and for the higher levels of consumption for their family which are available here. The common denominator of these extremely different cases is the influence of familial ideology.

IV. The Vicious Circle of Inequalities

The majority of people included in Fordham's survey arrived here between 1970 and 1973 (27.4% of the men; 33.3% of the women) and 1974-1979 (46.2% of the men; 34.6% of the women). In terms of age at arrival and time of residence, men and women had a similar migratory experience. Men on the average arrived when they were 23 years old, while women averaged 25 years of age.

Women predominate in the 30-39 age group, while men present a bi-model distribution[27] -- they predominate in the 25-29 age group, an early stage in one's economically active life -- and also in the 45-49 age group. But both sexes have similar average ages, women averaging 33 while men average 31.

Differences of age between Colombian men and women and differences according to civil status, e.g., a larger predominance of single people among men than among women, probably interferes in the way both sub-populations compete in the labor market. But as we observed from survey data, women with different characteristics in terms of age, civil status, and scholarship occupy similar positions in the labor market, so we cannot attribute their position in the labor market solely to these factors.

Women are in more unfavorable situations in a number of categories, such as:

1) lower level of formal education;

2) no courses being taken in the U.S.;

3) no knowledge of English;

4) more limitations to jobs near or in the home;

5) more employed by small firms.

See Table 2 for more details.

Table 2: Distribution and Dissimilarities Between Colombian Men and Women in Queens, New York, 1981

Category	Men	Women	Sex Differential Ratio
Residence in U.S.			
less than 1 year	6.2%	6.5%	- 4.6%
1-5 years	40.0%	36.8%	8.7%
6-10 years	26.2%	25.8%	1.6%
11-15 years	20.0%	22.6%	- 11.5%
16-25 years	6.3%	6.5%	- 3.0%
Distribution by Age			
average age	31	34	
age range	20-47	20-47	
median age	29	33	
mode	25-29 years	30-34 years	
25-29	31.1%	11.9%	158.3%
30-34	16.1%	30.2%	- 46.7%
Distribution by Civil Status			
single	26.2%	16.1%	62.7%
married	60.0%	65.6%	- 8.5%
common law marriage	6.3%	4.3%	46.5%
widow/widower	0	1.1%	just women
separated/divorced	7.5%	12.9%	- 41.8%
Scholarship			
primary school-complete	6.3%	26.9%	- 76.5%
primary school-incomplete	1.2%	5.4%	- 77.7%
secondary school-complete	53.7%	35.5%	51.3%
secondary school-incomplete	16.2%	19.4%	- 16.5%
associate/technical degree	10.0%	8.6%	16.3%
bachelor's degree	6.3%	3.2%	96.9%
Scholarship in the U.S.			
never studied in U.S.	67.5%	79.6%	- 15.2%
Economically Active Life (Paid Labor)			
Number of jobs			
1	21.2%	25.8%	- 17.8%
2	38.7%	31.2%	24.0%
3-5	33.7%	29.0%	16.2%
6-8	5.0%	2.2%	127.3%
9 or more	0	8.6%	just women
student only	0	1.1%	just women
Length of time in labor market			
0-2 years	14.9%	22.6%	- 34.1%
3-5 years	23.7%	22.6%	4.9%
6-10 years	35.0%	24.7%	41.7%
11-15 years	20.0%	16.1%	24.2%
Duration of First Job			
less than 1 year	41.0%	22.0%	86.4%
more than 3 years	27.0%	44.2%	- 38.9%
Majority of Co-workers Are Hispanic	46.0%	62.8%	- 26.8%

continued on the next page...

Table 2: Distribution and Dissimilarities Between Colombian Men and Women in Queens, New York, 1981, continued

Category	Men	Women	Sex Differential Ratio
First Occupation in U.S.			
unskilled blue collar	39.8%	41.4%	- 3.9%
service workers	37.5%	15.1%	148.3%
garment industry	2.5%	23.7%	89.5%
Present Occupation			
blue collar	37.4%	48.9%	- 23.5%
domestic servants	0	4.3%	just women
non-domestic service workers	26.1%	14.0%	88.4%
white collar	31.0%	8.0%	287.5%
Unemployed People- Reasons for Not Looking for Work			
pregnancy	0	5.9%	just women
family responsibilities	0	64.7%	just women
will look after finding place to live	100.0%	0	just men
Location of Work Place			
own home or building	1.4%	8.3%	- 83.1%
own neighborhood	6.8%	6.7%	1.5%
other areas in Queens	28.4%	33.3%	- 14.7%
Manhattan	45.9%	36.7%	25.1%
other areas of New York City	13.5%	10.0%	35.0%
outside New York City	4.1%	5.0%	18.0%
Occupational Mobility- First and Present Occupations in U.S. the Same	44.4%	56.0%	- 20.7%
Size of Firms Employing Colombians			
1-10 employees	21.3%	35.7%	- 40.3%
51-100 employees	22.7%	16.1%	41.0%
Income-Weekly			
average	$266.61	$174.00	
range	$60-800	$50-300	
median	$249.00	$169.00	
mode	$141-250	$141-250	
above the mode	51.9%	11.3%	359.3%
Friends' Ethnicity			
majority not Hispanic	5.0%	5.4%	- 7.4%
at least half not Hispanic	6.3%	2.2%	186.4%
few are not Hispanic	68.8%	58.1%	18.4%
none are not Hispanic	18.8%	32.3%	- 41.8%
Knowledge of English			
no knowledge of English	18.8%	46.2%	- 59.3%
total comprehension-oral + written	55.0%	31.2%	76.3%
Remittance to Colombia-Money/goods			
nothing	37.5%	48.4%	- 22.5%
Relatives in U.S.			
none at time of arrival	31.1%	14.0%	122.1%
spouse already here	2.7%	16.1%	- 83.2%
spouse and others already here	21.5%	32.3%	- 33.4%

continued on next page...

Table 2: Distribution and Dissimilarities Between Colombian Men and Women in Queens, New York, 1981, continued

Category	Men	Women	Sex Ratio Differential
Help Received upon Arrival			
none	46.2%	34.4%	34.3%
Way of Getting Present Job			
through friends or relatives	70.7%	75.4%	- 6.2%

Source: Fordham Survey

For more details on the complete distribution in some of these categories, see Urrea, 1982

Comparing the first job in the U.S. and the present one, as will be done in another chapter, and considering weekly income, women hold worse positions. However, there should be no consequent assumption that Colombian men are in a good position in the New York labor market. (This is discussed in Urrea, 1982.) The point is that the same pattern found in Colombia has been reproduced in the new context -- dissimilarities between men and women, with women in worse positions in terms of economic indicators.

In 1970, independent of their ethnicity, women were more represented below the "poverty level" in New York (less than $4,000) than were men.

> "About 53% of Colombian women had incomes below $4,000 in 1970, while 56% of all women were in the same situation. Of all men, 28%, and in the case of Colombians, 25%, were below this level in New York" (Powers and Macisco, 1980: 245; author's translation).

This indicator, gross income, translates into higher differentials between Colombian men and women in the labor market and a worse position for women, according to the Fordham data.

The average weekly earnings of Colombian women is $174, while men average $266.61. In the case of women, the extremes range from $50.00 to $300.00, and the median is $169.00. For men, it runs from $60.00 to $800.00, with a median of $249.00. The majority of Colombian men and women are in the group which earns from $141.00 to $250.00, but while 51.9% of the men earn more than this amount, just 11.3% of the women do.

In any event, it is relative and circular to explain the lower position of women in the labor market by using indicators of scholarship, for instance. As can be seen in Figure 1, which describes women who were directly interviewed, cases of women with higher education were found in the garment industry or as blue collar workers. Single women are not in better jobs, and a high proportion of married women with small children work full time.

In addition, no knowledge of English limits labor circulation, as was stated by both male and female interviewees, but women generally would add that they did not study English for reasons related to their working conditions (tiring work, long distances to travel, housework, complex scheduling, etc.), their double burden, complaints about English courses available near their homes, etc. So a vicious circle is reinforced, and more women remain in their first jobs or in the same occupational sphere in which they first entered the labor market.

From the outset, they are more restricted in the labor market by the way they were first recruited. It is more probable that Colombian women will have less turnovers or job changes and will stay longer in their first jobs than men. "Once you get into the garment industry, it is difficult to get out, because I only know people who work there, and sewing is the only skill I have developed." (Tulia)

This analysis suggests that it is in the articulation of patriarchalism within capitalism's rules -- for instance, the female migrant labor forces' role of feeding into industries such as the garment industry -- upon which we should place the emphasis, and not just on either pariarchalism or capitalism.

Within the Colombian community in New York, women's incomes are necessary for household maintenance and for remittances. At the same time, the salary in New York allows some potential power to women -- "At least if I want to, I can live alone here with the money I make; in Colombia, I could not afford to live alone." (María Fernández) In any event, at the household level, because of her lower income, the Colombian woman is still considered a supplementary breadwinner.

V. Occupational Mobility -- Differences Between Colombian Men and Women

In comparing the occupational situations in Colombia and the U.S., one notes:

1. Here, 68.3% more women are in industry than observed in the analysis on the Colombian working experience. Commerce in Colombia employed about 10.8% of the women, while in New York, just 3% of Colombian women were in this sector.

2. Changes occurred for both men and women. Many who were white collar workers in Colombia are now blue collar workers (women) and workers in restaurants and the services (men).

In comparing the first job in the U.S. with the current one, other changes were noticed. (See Tables 3 and 4.) While men tend to be more concentrated in Group I -- office employers, etc., and decrease their participation in blue collar and service occupations, women increased their participation in services (cleaning) and in commerce, but in the garment industry, less than 20% of the women who first worked there moved on to other fields of work.

In order to have a clearer idea of differentials by sex in the occupational structure, an index of differentials (ID) was used, in which values were established according to the distribution we found. In this case, the index took values from 0 to 3, with 0 meaning no dissimilarity between men and women, and 3 meaning the highest dissimilarity between them. This was calculated for three moments in the life histories -- the longest occupation in Colombia, the first occupation in the U.S., and the present occupation in New York. (See Table 5.)

The highest point of differentials was observed in moment 2, the first occupation in New York, when differentials between men and women were higher, even when "exclusively feminine" occupations such as housewife and domestic servant were not considered. In the first occupation in New York, the ID was 2.26. When considering the occupational distribution in Colombia, it was 1.6. For the present occupation, it was also 1.6. But these figures hide internal differentials of the occupational structure in each period -- if the analysis is by occupation, larger differentials in terms of concentration were:

1. In Colombia, in the occupation of sales (more women) and industrial workers (more men);

Table 3: Occupations of Colombian Men and Women over Four Time Periods, Queens, New York, 1981

	Colombia	First Job U.S.	Job Most Time U.S.	Current Job U.S.	Change A-D	Change B-D
WOMEN:						
White Collar Workers						
Professional/Technical	4.4	1.1	1.1	1.1		
Managers/Administrators	6.5	1.1	1.1	2.2		
Sales Personnel	14.0	5.4	4.3	2.2		
Office Workers	12.9	5.4	6.5	3.3	-372.5%	-62.5%
Blue Collar Workers						
Artesans/Others	4.3	9.8	15.2	25.1		
Operators (not transport)	2.2	37.6	29.0	21.6		
Operators (transport)	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1		
Other Workers	----	4.3	2.2	1.1	82.4%	4.3%
Service Workers						
Domestics	----	5.4	5.4	4.3		
Non-domestic workers	6.5	9.7	10.8	14.0	64.5%	17.5%
Agriculture						
Farmers/Managers	----	----	----	----		
Workers	----	----	----	----	----	----
Housewives	21.5	14.0	19.4	28.8	16.6%	45.7%
Students	17.2	1.1	1.1	3.2	-437.5%	65.6%
Unemployed	3.2	2.2	2.2	3.3	----	33.3%
MEN:						
White Collar Workers						
Professional/Technical	7.5	3.7	7.5	7.5		
Managers/Administrators	11.2	2.5	11.2	13.7		
Sales Personnel	6.3	3.7	4.9	4.9		
Office Workers	12.2	5.0	6.2	4.9	-20.0%	52.0%
Blue Collar Workers						
Artisan /Others	12.4	16.1	13.6	16.2		
Operators (not transport)	12.3	23.7	23.7	16.3		
Operators (transport)	----	1.2	1.2	----		
Other Workers	----	1.2	1.2	----	34.0%	-13.0%
Service Workers						
Domestics	----	----	----	----		
Non-domestic Workers	9.9	37.5	27.4	26.1	62.1%	-43.6%
Agriculture						
Farmers/Managers	----	1.2	----	----		
Workers	----	1.2	----	----	----	----
Housewives	----	----	----	----	----	----
Students	23.7	1.2	----	----	----	----
Unemployed	1.2	----	1.2	2.5	52.0%	100.0%

Table 4: Change in Position and Differentials by Sex of Colombian Men and Women by Branch of Activity, Queens, New York, 1981

WOMEN:	Colombia	First Job U.S.	Job Most Time U.S.	Current Job U.S.	Change A-D	Change B-D
Industry	13.0	56.4	50.2	41.0	68.3%	-37.6%
Garment	4.3	23.7	23.9	20.4		
Miscellaneous	----	12.9	12.0	9.7		
Services	34.5	29.1	37.0	41.0	15.8%	29.0%
Collective Consumption	13.0	2.2	5.5	5.7		
Personal Consumption	21.5	25.8	30.4	34.4		
Maintenance Service/ Office Maintenance	----	4.3	6.5	7.5		
Domestic Service- Private Household	1.1	7.5	4.3	2.2		
Housewife	20.4	14.0	10.6	24.7		
Production	----	1.1	1.1	1.1		
Commerce	21.5	10.8	7.7	3.3	-551.5%	-227.2%
Restaurant/Cafeteria	3.2	5.4	2.2	2.2		
Transport	3.2	1.1	2.2	2.2		
Finance	1.1	----	----	2.2		
MEN:						
Industry	16.0	35.9	32.1	29.3	45.0%	-24.0%
Garment	1.2	2.5	3.7	5.1		
Miscellaneous	----	2.5	1.2	1.3		
Services	26.3	31.1	35.0	36.7	-28.0%	16.0%
Collective Consumption	21.3	15.0	16.3	15.3		
Personal Consumption	----	12.4	15.0	15.2		
Maintenance Service/ Office Maintenance	----	11.2	15.0	15.2		
Domestic Service- Private Household	----	1.2	----	----		
Housewife	----	----	----	----		
Production	5.0	3.7	3.7	6.3		
Commerce	14.9	23.7	19.9	20.3	25.0%	-15.0%
Restaurant/Cafeteria	3.7	20.0	13.7	12.7		
Transport	6.3	1.2	2.2	10.1		
Finance	2.5	2.5	----	1.3		

Table 5: Index of Differentials by Sex of Colombian Men and Women by Occupation, Queens, New York, 1981

	Colombia	First Job U.S.	Job Most Time U.S.	Current Job U.S.
White Collar Workers				
Professionals/Administrators	-0.411	-0.651	-0.882	-0.850
Sales Personnel	+1.222	+0.459	-0.122	-0.326
Office Workers	+0.057	-0.982	+0.048	-0.326
Blue Collar Workers				
Artisans	-0.653	-0.391	+0.117	+0.562
Workers-Skilled + Unskilled	-0.821	+0.586	+0.260	+0.375
Other Workers	----	-0.541	-0.400	-0.600
Service Workers				
Domestic Workers	----	women only	women only	women only
Non-domestic Workers	-0.343	-0.743	-0.592	-0.461
Housewives	----	women only	women only	women only
TOTAL INDEX:	+1.279	-3.308	-1.996	-2.563
	-2.887	+1.045	+0.382	+0.937
	-1.608	-2.263	-1.674	-1.626

Index +0.048 1.222*
(-) (+)

* See Duncan and Duncan, 1961

2. In New York, as first occupation, in white collar occupations (clerical workers) and services (more men than women);

3. In New York, currently, in professional and technical occupations (more men), skilled workers (more men), and artisans (more women).

But at a higher level of disaggregation, a different occupational concentration was observed. Colombian men migrants presently in New York are more represented than women migrants in the following occupations: liberal professions, technicians, administrative occupations, white collar, construction workers, mechanics, jewelers, taxi drivers, restaurant occupations, cleaning, and doormen.

Colombian women migrants are more represented than men in the following occupations: sales (shops), cashiers, clerks (lower level), paid domestic workers such as seamstresses, garment industry (chiefly sewing, since men predominate in cutting fabric), packing, hotel cleaning women, and "obviously," as domestic servants and housewives.

The majority of Colombian men and women circulate in the so-called secondary market, but it is clear that this sector also involves a second level of segmentation, by sex. (For a more detailed analysis of the dynamics of this secondary market, with a more in-depth discussion of the supply as well as demand behavior and the use of the Colombian labor force in New York, see Urrea, 1982.)

6. Mobility and Scholarship, or the Myth of the Open Society

The idea of continuing one's studies or of taking courses in the U.S. is an argument that our interviewees frequently presented as they defended their stay in

the U.S., or the postponement of the return to Colombia. Depending on age and the family cycle, this argument refers either to the women speaking, or is transferred to their children, and usually it is a goal placed in some non-specific future time.

America is thought of by some as the land of opportunity, and the spreading ideology of education as a mechanism of social mobility is a strong one among Colombian migrants. (See Estela's interview in Appendix A.)

But, in accordance with micro empirical evidence from the survey and the interviews, it is not very likely that the continuation of one's studies actually happens when this project is self-referred. (See María Fernández's interview, Appendix B.) This is basically related to the working situation, since blue collar and service worker interviewees commented that it is hard for them to take courses after work. Often their legal status is also given as an obstacle, but it is chiefly the high cost of tuition that hinders them.

> "In Queens College where I study there are more than a hundred Colombian students. Some of them had to ask for loans. For many, the dream in coming was to study. But it is difficult if you do not have papers. Because if you do not have your papers, you have to pay for your classes. Those who have their documents don't have information about the procedures for getting loans. Some start school and then have to leave. The majority of my friends have to work. Loans are about $1,500." (Julio)

According to Table 6, the proportion of Colombian men taking technical courses or receiving a university degree is somewhat higher than that of Colombian women. In general, only a low proportion of Colombians in New York study English (less than 7% of each sex group).

Table 6: Distribution of Colombian Men and Women According to Their Studies in the U.S., Queens, New York, 1981

Studies	Men	Women
Never studied in the U.S.	67.5	79.6
Studied high school in the U.S.	2.5	5.4
Attended college in the U.S.	1.2	----
Completed MA in the U.S.	3.7	----
Other studies	1.2	----
Studied English	6.3	6.5
Presently in high school	2.5	----
Presently taking technical courses	12.5	4.3
Presently in college	1.2	2.2
Presently in master's program	1.2	2.2

Since time of residence and age are constraints to attaining formal education, these factors were controlled in the analysis of sample data, and Table 7 refers just to Colombian migrants who had been here for more than one year.

Indeed, in the Colombian male migrant group between 15-19 years of age, there is a higher proportion who studied or who are studying, but in all other age cohorts, independent of sex, it is most common that no courses are being taken in New York.

Table 7: Educational Activity in the U.S. by Age Cohort - Colombian Migrants with at least One Year's U.S. Residence. Queens, New York, 1981 (percentage)

	MALE				FEMALE			
Age	High School/ Technical	University Post-Grad. Other	English	None	High School/ Technical	University Post-Grad. Other	English	None
15-19	50.0	12.5	12.5	25.0	13.3	6.7	0.0	80.0
20-24	12.0	12.0	12.0	64.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.00
25-29	14.3	0.0	0.0	85.7	14.3	7.1	14.3	64.3
30-34	0.0	7.1	0.0	92.9	0.0	4.8	9.5	85.7
35-39	0.0	9.1	0.0	90.9	13.3	0.0	0.0	86.7
40-44	50.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	75.0

The majority of women interviewed said that their lack of English is an obstacle to getting a white collar job, e.g. secretaries, typists, etc. Single women also say they are limited to a circle of Hispanic friends[28] because of this handicap, but in any event, learning English is a generally postponed goal. In part this is due to the lack of accessible courses, in terms of price and location, and in part it is due to their daily rhythm of life and to their wastage as a labor force.

VII. Segmentation Within Segmentation

Disaggregating occupational categories is a better tool for visualizing sexual differentiation in the supply of Colombian labor in New York (Queens residents) than working with classifications which are aggregated.

This technique, presented in Table 8, is based on the following hypothesis: women are usually employed in "feminine" occupations, meaning

1) occupations which are, in principle, similar to those tasks which they have traditionally been engaged in for no pay at the household level, i.e. cooking, laundry, cleaning, sewing, etc.;

2) occupations where the work is largely of a repetitive nature and which requires manual dexterity, such as "finishing work;"

3) Occupations which require no, or minimal, involvement with heavy machinery or power tools, i.e. they would not be welders;

4) assembly line work;

5) occupations in more traditional industries, in the sense that the work is characterized by low mechanization and low rates of capital investment.

This is the framework within which the occupations of the informants of the survey were classified. The three-digit classification of the U.S. Census Bureau was used, but it was reorganized according to the guidelines set by my hypothesis.

The data presented in Table 8 highlight that while it can be confirmed that there is a high rate of occupational segregation based on sex, women do not necessarily

Table 8: Dissimilarities by Sex in the Occupational Distribution, Colombian Migrants in Queens, New York, 1981, Index of Dissimilarities ("crude measure of dissimilarity" and "standard measure of dissimilarity")

Occupation	WOMEN (a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	MEN (a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	Total	Dissimilarities (b)	(d)
1. jeweler and other craftsmen	1	1.1	333	2.0	2	2.5	667	3.5	3	-1.4	-1.5
2. foremen not elsewhere classified	--	--	--	--	2	2.5	1000	5.2	2	-2.5	-5.2
3. house-private seamstress	4	4.3	1000	6.0	--	--	--	--	4	4.3	6.0
4. dressmaker, tailor-outside business, leather cutter	5	5.4	1000	6.0	--	--	--	--	5	5.4	6.0
5. shoemaker, wallet maker, pocketbook maker	1	1.1	333	2.0	2	2.5	667	3.5	3	-1.4	-1.5
6. ironer-factory (shirts) and seving/embroidering machine worker in garment industry	12	12.9	800	4.7	3	3.7	200	1.0	15	9.2	3.7
7. worker in furniture factory, upholsterer; plastics, kitchenware, paper, gum, paint, cassette box, guitar case factory; electronics equipment + related items	10	10.8	625	3.7	6	7.5	375	1.9	16	3.3	1.8
8. drivers + deliverymen; "deliveries," chauffer-agency, taxi-driver (own car), truck driver, apprentice driver, conductor, freight/cargo service, postal worker, flight assistant	1	1.1	200	1.2	4	5.0	800	4.2	5	-3.9	-3.0
9. stock person; sorter-plastic bags	--	--	--	--	2	2.4	1000	5.2	2	-2.4	-5.2
10. domestic worker	3	3.2	1000	6.0	--	--	--	--	3	-3.2	6.0
11. babysitter	1	1.1	1000	6.0	--	--	--	--	1	1.1	6.0
12. restaurant cook	1	1.1	500	2.9	1	1.2	500	2.6	2	-0.1	0.3
13. waiter, bartender-restaurant	1	1.1	167	0.9	5	6.3	833	4.4	6	-5.2	-3.5
14. dishwasher	--	--	--	--	1	1.2	1000	5.2	1	-1.2	-5.2
15. kitchen assistant	1	1.1	1000	6.0	--	--	--	--	1	1.1	6.0
16. building security guard	--	--	--	--	1	1.2	1000	5.2	1	-1.2	-5.2
17. doormen-hotel	--	--	--	--	1	1.2	1000	5.2	1	-1.2	-5.2
18. maintenance-discoteque, hospital, office	3	3.2	273	0.6	8	10	727	3.8	11	-6.8	-1.2
19. maintenance workers, maintenance company-buildings + offices	2	5.4	714	4.2	2	2.5	286	1.5	7	2.9	2.7
20. liberal occupations, writer, journalist, professor	--	--	--	--	2	2.5	1000	5.2	2	-2.5	-5.2

21. middle-level technician (accountant, public relations, etc.)	1	1.1	250	1.5	3	3.7	750	3.9	4	-3.7	-3.9
22. administrators (restaurant, supervisor, account distribution manager, supply/inventory supervisor)	1	1.1	143	0.1	6	7.5	857	4.5	7	-6.4	-3.7
23. self-employed workers-retail trade, salesman-own store, grocery store, merchant-owned business	1	1.1	333	2.0	2	2.5	667	3.5	3	-1.4	-1.5
24. self-employed workers (except retail trade), investment advisor, accounting advisor	1	1.1	500	2.9	1	1.2	500	2.6	2	-0.1	0.3
25. grocery store assistant, store salesperson, grocery store salesperson	1	1.1	1000	6.0	--	--	--	--	1	1.1	6.0
26. door-to-door salesperson (cosmetics, house + beauty prod.)	--	--	--	--	1	1.2	1000	5.2	1	-1.2	-5.2
27. other salesperson (sales representative, salesperson-credit cards, insurance sales)	--	--	--	--	2	2.5	1000	5.2	2	-2.5	-5.2
28. secretary, typist, receptionist	2	2.2	667	3.9	1	1.2	333	1.7	3	1.2	1.7
29. other clerical workers (billing/invoices of sales), inventory, assistant bookkeeper, collector + related occupations)	1	1.1	200	1.2	4	5.0	800	4.2	5	-5.0	-4.2
30. construction workers except carpenter; house painter, mechanic + repairmen (air conditioner, welder, industrial mechanic, joiner, mechanic-repair shop, TV repair shop, electrician, car mechanic, gas station	1	1.1	77	0.5	12	14.9	923	4.8	13	-14.9	-4.8
31. chamber maid-hotel	1	1.1	1000	6.0	--	--	--	--	1	1.1	6.0
32. housewife	23	24.7	1000	6.0	--	--	--	--	23	24.7	6.0
33. student	3	3.2	1000	6.0	--	--	--	--	3	3.2	6.0
34. does not work	7	7.6	777	4.6	2	2.5	223	1.2	9	5.1	3.4
TOTAL:	93		16892		80		19108		173		

1. Crude Measure of Dissimilarity-CMD-66.6
Standard Measure of Dissimilarity-SMD-60.0
Ratio SMD/CMD-0.89
the highest dissimilarities are due to occupations of a lower proportion. The occupational structure influences the comparison, being responsible for the dissimilarities more than the size of each occupational group by sex. re. CMD and SMD, see Gibbs (1965) and Duncan and Duncan (1961).

2. The 3-digit occupational classification follows U.S. Census Bureau classifications.

(a) number of informants in this category in Fordham survey
(b) proportion-this category in relation to total
(c) standardized total is 1000
(d) = (c), as proportion of the sum TOTAL column.

predominate in all activities which are regarded as "women's work" in terms of the reproduction of domestic activities. For example, sewing is an activity where one finds only women, regardless of the degree of institutionalization or legality of the workplace, be it at home or in the factory. Women also predominate in activities such as pressing clothes and operating sewing machines (specializing in producing the final product for market). Women also predominate in the category of personal domestic services (maid services, babysitting). However, when it comes to cooking, if it occurs in a restaurant, we find men. The same holds true for waiting on tables and washing dishes. Maintenance work, both in the public sector and that which is provided by service enterprise, is carried out by men and women.

In summary, the only categories which just barely qualify as exclusive fields for women are those of domestic personal services and sewing. Men already predominate in the majority of the other occupations.

Men not only have more diversified alternatives, but they also participate in some occupations which historically have been dominated by women, like cleaning, and, of course, men are more highly represented in activities which have traditionally been "masculine," i.e. the "30s group," which is weighted toward the mechanics and repair categories.

It appears that the "masculinization" of some feminine activities is related to the dynamics of the economy. As overall demand contracts, the male labor force has to engage in what, in Colombia, would have been "women's work." But this "invasion" of spheres is relative. The social characteristics of work are not determined by what one does, as much as by how one does it. Thus, we find that activities which are related to personal consumption, with the family as its locus, such as making clothes at home or working as maids, continues to be women's work.

When the occupational structure is disaggregated, dispersion is revealed as a common experience for both sexes; however, this dispersion is more accentuated among the males. Women only make up a higher proportion of the total in the activity/occupation of housewife (24.7%), pressing and sewing clothes in the garment industry (12.9%), and as unskilled labor in factories producing non-durable goods (10.8%). Men only have a concentration of over 10% in the occupational categories of mechanic/repairmen (the "30s group" with 14.9%) and as workers in building maintenance (12.5%).

The measure of 0.66 on Duncan's crude measure of dissimilarity (CMD) indicates that there is a high level of dissimilarity in the male-female ratio of occupational distribution. Almost 67% of the females would have to experience a change in their positions in order for them to attain parity in occupational distribution with men.

The Duncan Index may be affected by the size of the individual occupational strata. To control for the weights of the male-female ration in different occupational structures, we will turn to Gibbs' proposals (1965) which allow us to standardize Duncan's standard measure of dissimilarity (SMD). The SMD value is 0.60. This value is very close to that which was calculated for the CMD. Thus, the degree of dissimilarity between the sexes cannot wholly be attributed to differences in the size of the occupational categories. Occupational structure would add only very slightly to the totals of the differentials of the groups being compared. On the other hand, the ratio between the SMD and the CMD of 0.89 would, according to Gibbs, indicate that the major differentials are due to categories where the concentration is lowest. In consequence, one cannot, for example, attribute the greater weight assigned to differences in occupational distribution to a greater concentration of women in the garment industry. Thus, the segmentation of women in the New York labor market is

related to the structure of the overall labor market rather than only to specific sectors of the economy such as the garment industry.

The validity of the concept of segmentation within segmentation has been demonstrated , i.e. Colombian women are found in the least attractive activities within the labor market. This type of analysis seeks to underscore the relationship between the two dimensions of segmentation, ethnicity and sex.

According to the theory of dual labor markets, men and women are recruited in different ways. The labor market is structured to the disadvantage of women (Sokoloff, 1981). Several studies undertaken by North American researchers demonstrate that North American women are also found in occupations characterized by instability, lack of possibilities for promotions ("dead-end" jobs, or jobs held by "target earners"), poorer working conditions than men, lack of social security coverage, part-time employment, etc.--in short, jobs within the secondary market. In the case of women, Sokoloff's basic tenent is that the duality, or multiplicity, of job markets emphasizes the absence of competition between men and women as workers. "Instead, they are paid to work in separate jobs, separate industries, and separate labor markets. In each case, women are paid less than men" (Sokoloff, 1981: 130).

Data presented in Table 8 support the thesis that men and women are involved in separate labor markets, or that the demand for female migrant labor is of a different nature than that for males. A comparison of figures which fall under item "C" of Table 8 highlights the concentrations according to occupation and sex.

It is not enough to recognize that the relationship between a woman's household and labor market roles results in the disadvantaged position women occupy in competition for jobs within the labor market, e.g. acceptance of part-time work. When shifts of supply affect demand in the labor market, women are discriminated against not only because they are women, but also because employers find it advantageous to treat all women as mothers and housewives, regardless of whether they are or not. Employers use this strategy because single North American and migrant workers are also present in the secondary market. (See Sokoloff, and Oppenheimer in particular, as cited in Sokoloff, 1981.)

However, the thesis that the role of housewife, or houseworker (Oakley, 1974), conditions the treatment of women in the labor market should be approached with caution. According to the literature of the feminist-Marxist school of thought, one cannot exclusively attribute patriarchal structures to the institution of the "family." Patriarchal structures are also present and manipulated by the labor market. Women are discriminated against in the labor market because industries find it convenient to treat them as second-class workers and to categorize them as actual or potential housewives. The dynamic of the exploitation and oppression of women can best be explained by examining the structure of the labor market and by amplifying patriarchalism in combination with the laws of capitalist markets. (Examples of the school of thought are found in Sokoloff, 1981, and Eisenstein, 1979.)

VIII. Women's Perceptions of Working Conditions in the Workplace

The majority of the women I directly interviewed have worked in the garment industry. Their criticisms of the working conditions in "sweat shops," "talleres," and factories vary, usually as functions of the size of the firm and the activity engaged in, but their common response is criticism about it, along with affirmations that they work there because they do not have other alternatives.

Work done in the garment industry can be described as repetitive, boring, and uncreative. It is characterized by section work, rigid timetables (in many cases just half an hour for lunch, and just ten minute rest periods for people who work standing up), rigid vigilance, constant demands to produce more and more, and competition among the workers, spurred on by bosses and foremen/women, based on the volumes produces by piece workers.

There is little contact among workers. Besides the constraints of the above-listed working conditions which do not allow much time to make friends, intervievees commented on the deliberate practice of mixing workers of different nationalities and, in some cases, who speak different languages. Rivalries related to ethnic discrimination among workers is common. It can be seen in the case of Colombians who refer to their co-workers as "vulgar," "ignorant," "illiterate" people. Their middle class origin damages their possibilities for worker's solidarity, but in this case, many other factors also play important roles -- the seasonal nature of the work, the high rate of turn-over in the garment industry, and the lack of aggressive recruiting of the immigrants by the trade unions.

Unions are perceived more in terms of the assistance they provide than in terms of their role as a class organ. Nevertheless, all the women interviewed knew that it is better to work in union shops, since there, the minimum wage is respected.

> "I am not in a union because I do not have time in this factory. I was in the union in the other factory. They help when a person is sick...But when that factory closed down, the union said they couldn't do anything. I could not collect anything because I don't have my residence." (Tulia)

> "I think it's important to be in a union, especially since we are Hispanic and undocumented. In this country they are so unfair to Hispanics...I just started to work in this factory, but when I'm eligible, I will join it... In Colombia, my father was in a union and he used to tell me that this is important." (Miriam)

The garment industry union in New York has a long history of fighting for workers' interests in the past[29] and European migrant women were active in the development of what is known as the North American "proletariat." This is history. In those times, the garment industry was a point industry active at the beginning of U.S. industrialization, and migrants came from countries that were economically on a par with the United States.

Today, the garment industry's role is less important in relationship to the New York economy as a whole, and Hispanic migrants enter as secondary workers from peripheral economies. Both "capital" and the unions treat them as such. That no significant attempts by unions are made to recruit migrants and protect their specific interests is commented upon by the specialized literature. On the other hand, some of the New York ILGWU locals do make sporadic attempts to include Hispanic migrants in their programs. More often than not, talks between unions and management result in "sweetheart contracts," with limited protection of the workers' interests. But these are over-simplified comments and more study of the unions' operations and the literature should be done.

The actual system of unionization is a complex one.[30] My study is not focusing on this matter, and these comments are presented just to deny the judgment that Colombian women workers' non-participation in unions might mean a lack of politization and commitment to their work. Their "possible consciousness" is limited in this case by the possibilities of the lived reality.

Indeed, the women I spoke with are not committed to their work, in terms of their liking it. "I work because I have to." And who would be committed to it under the conditions it offers? Colombian women migrants are productive, since it means money, and this is the basic reason for working under the conditions they do, and indeed, their class origin plays an important role in reinforcing their isolation as workers.

When these women criticize their living conditions in New York, two points are stressed: the limitations of their social contacts (few friends) and their working conditions. In these spheres, Colombia is praised, and comparisons are naturally presented. (See interviews with Rosita, Appendix A, and María Fernández, Appendix B.) These negative aspects were not thought about before these women came, and some said that they would have thought twice about coming, had they known, while others did not want to bring their relatives to undergo these same experiences. A common comment is that they work hard so their children will not need to work in the garment industry.

These comments are accompanied by the comment that at least they are making money. Their income is not necessarily as high as they would like, but it is more than they could imagine earning in Colombia.

The rate of exchange between dollars and pesos is their basic parameter of reference. The majority of the interviewees earn about the minimum wage ($3.50 per hour). Few refer to their situation in comparison with that of other groups in New York, white Americans in particular. (See María Fernández's comments, Appendix B, an exception.) Dollars as an expression of a comparatively better level of life underlies their decisions to stay. Dollars also affect inter-familial relations, a point that will be discussed later in this section.

"No, the work in the factory [garment] is terrible. Sewing the same part of the shirt over and over again. But it is not just that I earn more...money here is worth more. Really, the first day I was here, we went to a supermarket with a brother-in-law, and I was astonished when I saw that with 80 pesos in Colombia you could only buy about a pound of meat, while here you could buy an "arroba" [25 pounds].

COLOMBIAN MAN: "But Mercedes, you're comparing pesos with dollars..."

"We're in the United States, not in Colombia."

QUESTION: "How much is the dollar worth in Colombia now?"

"About 54 pesos."

COLOMBIAN MAN: "So $80 is about 500 pesos..."

"If I am in this country, I will not add up things as if I were in Colombia. I have to think about things the way they are here..."

QUESTION: "So for you, one dollar here is equal to one peso there?"

"Sure. I'm here. I'm spending here. If I send them $80, they will use it and then this will be more money."

QUESTION: "You said that when you came here from Colombia, you had been working is a coffee factory. What was your salary?"

"About 1500 pesos weekly, and now I earn $140, so there it would be six or seven thousand pesos. I would never earn that much there.

COLOMBIAN MAN: "So Mercedes, now you are making the conversion from dollars to pesos?"

"Of course. I send money. This is a lot of money. I probably sent about $400 last month, and I paid off all the debts I owed for coming here..." (Mercedes)

The interviewees know they are being paid less for jobs equivalent to those done by men. They see that even when Colombian men they know were not necessarily in the same industry or job, they do similar jobs in terms of skills. The women assured me that this does not mean that men have better working conditions, "here everyone has to work hard," but just that they earn more. Sex differences are noted acritically. For married women, the important thing is that the family salary is higher than in Colombia. Many explain these differences in terms of their own personal skills and characteristics. They do not have the same strength, they cannot afford to do the same jobs, or they do not have the same knowledge of the market, etc.[31]

Thus we see that the subordination ideology or the lack of self-esteem is reproduced by income differences, although working conditions are not so different. When asked about the differences between men and women workers, a number of characteristics were voiced.

> "I think women can get work easier than men. We can always work for a family as domestic workers. It's easier for women in the factories, too. In the "Cavalier" factory there are more women. Men and women in the garment factory where I work earn the same. Both men and women have the same daily routine here. In Colombia, men are paid much better than women." (Mercedes)
>
> "It all depends on the person's capacity. Men have generally had more opportunities to study, so they are paid better." (Helena)
>
> "Only men work the cutting machines in my factory...But there are some women who cut with scissors...That work is less boring than mine." (Mercedes)
>
> "It is difficult to know if they pay women better than men, since they don't work together. In the doll factory where I work, men receive more, but they put the hair in dolls, while we just comb it." (Miriam)
>
> "For women it's easier to get jobs in the garment industry and in families' houses. Colombian men don't have access to these jobs. First, people think the men are in the drug business...and, as my boss said, they do not have patience to use the sewing machines...But I think men have to get used to it. For instance, I have friends who work in restaurants washing dishes and even cooking...For women, it's no problem. They have been doing this all their lives. It's harder for the men to work here." (Miriam)
>
> "Now I'm like a crab, going backwards. I used to have a very good job /her first job in New York, January, 1970/. In the Grossman garment factory, I used to take home $200 a week, a year ago. Now I just get the minimum, $3.50 an hour, so I get about $115 a week. I only know how to sew with the simple machines ("maquinillas de manito"). Now I'm helping the machine operator. My husband has been working as a dishwasher for one year in the same place. He makes more, about $150 a week, and he just works from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM, while I work from 8:30 to 5:00. Since he is earning more, there is no problem, and we can still afford to send money to Colombia to pay for our children's education...Of course I know that he has more opportunities here than I do, but this happens everywhere. In Colombia, too. I didn't work in Colombia. I had to take care of the kids. He didn't let me work there because he was jealous. Now I work just with women... He knows more about the city. He knows where to look for jobs. He went a long way to get this job. I wouldn't work like him, in a restaurant in Brooklyn. There are so many drunk people..." (Tulia)

IX. Home and Work

In 1970, in New York, about 42% of all women over 16 years of age were in the labor force. Among Colombian women, the proportion was 58% (Powers and Macisco, 1980: 243). At that time, the majority of Colombian women had full-time jobs (81%, while for all women, the proportion was 76%) (Ibid.).

Marital status and mothering are traditionally considered to be powerful constraints against the participation of women in the labor force, either because of cultural patterns, such as the symbiotic mother-child relationship and the patriarchal norm that women belong to the home, or based on objective constraints, such as the lack of ample day care programs or, as is common in Latin America, of another woman to take over the mother-housewife's "duties," generally a domestic servant or a relative. It should be noted that even these objective constraints are mediated by patriarchal norms, since it's always the woman who "must" alter her situation in the labor market in order to take care of the children.

The analysis of the 1970 census data by Powers and Macisco shows that

> "Female labor force participation changes according to marital status. Among Colombian women, as among all women from 16 to 44 years of age, widows and separated women showed higher participation closely followed by single women. Women with children under 6 years of age probably would be less represented in the labor force. For Colombian women with children under 6, only 32% articipate in the labor force" (Powers and Macisco, 1980: 244; author's translation).

But it is interesting to notice that in spite of these differences in labor force participation according to marital status and life cycle situation, there was a high representation of part-time workers among both single women and married women living with their husbands, 52.4% and 45.8%, respectively. Segmentation of the labor market structure in addition to the domestic roles is needed to explain women's position in the labor market.

Let's analyze some information about women in the family structure in more detail, and then come back to this thesis.

Women in the Family

In this section, I will examine some combined information about husbands and wives, from survey data and from comments on intra-familial relations, in order to configurate dissimilarities, alliances, and contradictions inside the family.

Husbands and Wives

About 63.4% of the Fordham survey informants were people living in nuclear families (mother, father, and children). Women with children and without husbands constituted about 13.4%. Only 7% of the families had no mother-and-child registered. The other basic type of family we found subsumed both composed and extended families (16.2%). Thus, it would be more accurate to talk about types of families rather than just "the family." But I will limit this analysis to just one type of family, that in which both husband and wife are found. In comparing the husband and wife in terms of certain characteristics, several tendencies were noted.

1) Ethnic Composition

About 76% of Colombians were married to Colombians, which should be related to the fact that the majority of these people were already engaged or married when they came. Only 6% of the men and 4.5% of the women (in the married group) were

married to North Americans. The majority of these people had arrived at least six years prior to the survey and had been young when they came. So there is an endogamic pattern of marriage prevalent. This is more proof for the thesis that Hispanic migrants, or Colombians at least, circulate in a restricted part of American society with weak contacts with North American natives.

2) Age

On the average, husbands are five years older than wives. This follows a common pattern documented in Colombian society. A large age difference between spouses (with younger wives) holds true particularly in the older cohorts. In couples where wives were 40 to 45 years of age, almost 80% of the husbands were over 45.

Colombian anthropologist Gutiérrez de Piñeda comments that this is in accordance with patriarchal rules of inter-sexual relations by which a) men marry only when they are considered as able to afford to be the principal breadwinner, and b) women are sexually evaluated in terms of their physical age (Gutiérrez de Piñeda, 1968).

3) Formal Education

Among informants who were married and living with their spouses in New York, the predominance was of persons with secondary or technical degrees (49.4%), with a substantial proportion of people with incomplete primary (22%) or secondary (23.1%) education. It was typical that both the husband and wife had attained the same level of education, whatever it was. (See Table 9.)

Table 9: Highest Level of Education Obtained by Educational Level of Spouse

Highest Educational Level Attained	None	Primary	Incomplete Secondary	Secondary, Technical or Associate Degree	BA/BS	Post-Graduate Degree	Subtotal N	Subtotal %	TOTAL N	TOTAL %
Primary										
Male	---	----	----	33.3	----	----	3	7.5		
Female	6.7	66.7	6.7	33.4	13.3	----	17	33.3	20	22.0
Incomplete Secondary										
Male	---	11.1	22.2	66.7	----	----	9	22.5		
Female	---	16.7	25.0	58.3	----	----	12	23.5	21	23.1
Secondary, Technical or Associate Degree										
Male	---	25.0	6.0	66.2	2.8	----	23	57.5		
Female	2.7	21.9	----	56.2	19.2	----	22	43.1	45	49.4
BA/BS										
Male	---	----	----	----	100.0	----	1	2.5		
Female	---	----	----	----	100.0	----	1	0.1	2	2.2
Post-Graduate Degree										
Male	---	----	----	50.0	----	50.0	4	10.3		
Female	---	----	----	----	----	----	0	0	4	3.3
									92	100.0

So if the market were oriented by educational level of the labor force, there would be no great differences between husbands and wives in terms of occupation and income.

4) Occupation

The pattern of "homo-occupational" couples found is influenced by the high level of aggregation used in occupational classification. But according to Table 10 some small divergences are noted:

a) Men in the group white collar I (professional, technical, managers and administrators) are generally married to women who are in other groups (with lower remuneration) such as white collar II (sales and clerical workers), blue collar operatives, and service workers;

b) Blue collar crafts workers (husbands) married to service workers (wives), and service workers (husbands) married to blue collar operatives (wives) are a common combination.

Table 10: Current Occupation by Occupation of Spouse, Colombian Migrants, Queens, New York, 1981

Current Occupation-Husband	Current Occupation-Wife						
	White Collar I	White Collar II	Blue Collar Operative	Service Worker	SUB-TOTAL	House-wife	TOTAL
White Collar I	22.0	33.4	22.2	22.2	100%	52.2	100%
White Collar II	25.0	50.0	25.0	----	100%	20.0	100%
Blue Collar-Craft	----	8.6	50.0	41.6	100%	40.0	100%
Blue Collar-Operative	----	20.0	80.0	----	100%	44.0	100%
Blue Collar-Other	----	----	50.0	50.0	100%	71.0	100%
Service Worker	----	11.8	47.0	41.2	100%	26.0	100%

χ^2_0 — {0.81 - female informants; 0.47 - male informants} $\geq$ 0.05

Housewives

In two almost opposite occupational groups,[32] white collar II husbands and service worker husbands, the proportion of wives who work for pay is less than 30%. In other occupational groups, including those with the lowest remuneration, such as the blue collar operatives, the proportion of housewives is also high. So, although Urrea has demonstrated that the household in the basic unit of maintenance strategy, it is not necessarily the wife who is impelled to enter the labor market in those cases where the husband earns less. On the other hand, since it is not necessarily in the cases where the husband receives more that the wife leaves the labor market, other factors than just the internal budget orients women's labor force participation. Naturally those factors are related to the family cycle and composition.

Direct interviews, survey data, and Chaney's study (1980a) all indicate that for many women, including those who arrived at 25 years of age or older, their first job

was in the U.S. Yet when we refer to married women living with their husbands, the proportion of them who do not work outside the home for payment is high (about 40%). But this does not mean that these women were definitely or intentionally outside the paid labor market.

As already discussed, a large percentage of female Colombian paid workers are in the garment industry, a sector with a high index of turn-over and seasonability. So we can hypothesize that some portion of the group of housewives is not necessarily composed of voluntarily unemployed workers. Another hypothesis, that increases the probability of women's retirement from the labor market is commonly reported in women's studies: the incompatibility of the non-paid work of housewife and/or mother and the paid one in the labor market. I refer to those cases where it is impossible to make arrangements which will allow a woman to assume the double burden.

On the average, wives have a shorter paid work week (21-39 hours) while husbands are more apt to work a full 40 hours. (See Table 11.) About 12% of wives had paid work weeks of more than 40 hours. Among husbands, the proportion was 33.9%. There is no data on work performed at home (housework) for the survey group.

Table 11: Weekly Average Hours Worked by Spouse (Paid Market), Colombian Migrants, Queens, New York, 1981

Weekly Average Hours-Husband	Weekly Average Hours - Wife					
	11-20	21-39	40	41-50	51-60	61+
11-20	100%					
21-39	23.4	66.6				
40	25.0	25.0	50.0			
41-50		20.0	20.0	40.0		20.0
51-60			100%			
61+		66.6	33.4			

In interviews, the double burden was a common topic of conversation, although the women were eager to say that here they're better off, since it is easier to do housework (laundry facilities, semi-prepared foods, etc.), and here men are more apt to cooperate in doing the housework. But the norm is still that "they help," rather than take on the responsibility for certain aspects of the housework.

> "Here housework is easier. Here we only eat at home twice a day. In my country, I used to make breakfast, lunch and dinner, and mix the "tragitos" (drinks). I do housework on the weekends. There are some men friends living with us, but they don't do much at home. They don't know how to do things. It's better if they don't help." (Mercedes)

> "Men are used to helping. But in any case, the Colombian guys here are still looking for women to take care of them (hogareñas). I think they're scared of the American woman's way of life." (Miriam)

> "Well, as my husband's friends and families are not here, he is not ashamed to help. But I have a friend who lived here for a long time and then she and her husband went back. She wrote to me that he forgot everything he had learned. There she is the one who has to do everything." (Helena)

> "He is very cooperative. Sometimes he cooks when I am not here, but he never learned how to take care of the children when they were babies." (María Ana)

In the United States, the sexual division of labor inside the family has been redefined, but management and some activities are still "women's work" and there is no evidence that these changes mean a structural change in the Colombian family. Many interviewees doubt that their husbands would continue to help in the same way they do here, if they were back in Colombia.

In the literature, it is common to refer to the specificity of women's participation in the labor market, as well as to their cyclical performance, i.e. women will leave the labor market while their children are young or they will take only part-time work. I found both among the interviewees.

Some women say that they did not work for pay in Colombia because of class and sex restrictions. Some declare they did not find jobs appropriate to their social class or to their positions (as married women). As Estela comments, there is no problem in being a blue collar operative here, "Nobody knows me." The same observation was registered by Chaney (1980) and confirmed by me in the case of domestic servants. Lina never wrote to her friends in Colombia that she was working here as a domestic servant -- she had been a student there.

> "They wouldn't understand that it's not the same thing to clean apartments here and in Colombia. Here employers respect you." (Lina)

> "In Colombia I never worked outside my home. I worked for us, for our four children and for him. And I could not work when the children were small. He came here first. Then I left the children with my mother, one was seven and the other ten, and a sister. This was eleven years ago. I like it here very much. There I never worked. Here I work. I earn money, and I can do what I want. There I never used to go out. Here my husband and I go to Miami, to Atlantic City. We go out together once in a while. But always together..." (Tulia)

> "I did not work in Colombia because the children were small. But also because, you know, the social contradictions. How could a daughter of a respected person work anywhere? I did not have much education, but I couldn't lower myself and take a job in a factory...Here I work in a factory. But everyone I know does it. I heard that there are even some students in the factories, too." (Sponsoro, María Ana's friend)

Wives commonly say that they work harder here, and some stress that their work would be considered "shameful" if they were doing it in Colombia. Here there is less social distance between them and their husbands. They feel that they are both doing similar work, and here they earn at least enough money to afford them some autonomy.

As commented earlier, income is one indicator by which broader dissimilarities between Colombian women and men in the market was observed. Table 12 confirms the same rule at the couple level.

Table 12: Weekly Salary of Spouses (Workers Who Work 40 Hours or More in the Labor Market), Colombian Migrants, Queens, New York, 1981

Weekly Salary of Spouse-Wife	Weekly Salary of Spouse - Husband						
	$150-199	$200-249	$250-299	$300-349	$400-449	$450+	TOTAL (%)
$150-199	5.5	33.3	27.8	16.7		16.7	100%
$200-249	12.5	37.5	25.0	12.5		12.5	100%
$250-299			50.0			50.0	100%
$300-349		25.0	25.0	25.0	25.0		100%

About 50% of the wives (just considering those in the paid labor market) earn less than their husbands, and 30% earn the same amount. Even in those families where the husband and wife have the same work week, it was common that the husband's salary was higher than his wife's. Therefore, it is relative to attribute inferior position in the labor market only to the woman's burden with housework.

This observation does not imply that the patriarchal rules and family ideology do not play important roles in sex segmentation. Even if a woman's childrearing and housework do not objectively intervene in the way she presents herself to the labor market, she is treated according to the social reference given to her gender.

Differences in income support asymmetrical relations. Indeed, income allows women more potential autonomy. As they say, they can survive here with their salary, if they don't have to support others (children, family in Colombia, etc.), but it is the husband who earns more. Thus, it is "justified" that she have more responsibilities at home and that she take care of the children.

Childbearing and Colombian Women's Labor Force Participation

In 1970 the fertility rate of Colombian women between 16 and 44 years of age, calculated from census data (Powers and Macisco, 1980) was lower than that of all women in that age range living in New York (1.7% live births among Colombian women, and 2.0% live births among all women), but when women in the labor force were considered, another picture came out. According to Powers and Macisco,

> "Of women who had at one time or another been married, a larger proportion of Colombian women were in the work force when compared with all women. And the number of live births per 1000 Colombian women in the work force was higher than among all women in the labor force" (Powers and Macisco, 1980: 241; author's translation).

According to the Fordham data, Colombian women in Queens presented the same picture in terms of variables concerning childbearing and labor force participation.

1) Among women who work part-time, about 42% had children under five years of age, and 37% had children between six and ten years of age.

2) Although the presence of small children was lower among women who work 40 hours or more a week, it was still relatively high. About 29% of these women had children younger than five years of age, and 32% had children between six and ten years of age.

3) The majority of women who work for pay in their own homes, as well as those who were only housewives, had small children. (See Table 13.)

Table 13. Presence of Children and Type of Labor force Participation, Colombian Women in Queens, New York, 1981

Presence of Children Under 6 Years of Age in the Family	Type of Labor Force Participation			
	Part-Time	40 hour or More Work Week	Housewife	Paid Work at home
Yes	42.0	29.3	44.4	85.7
No, just between 6 + 10	36.8	31.7	27.8	14.3
No	21.2	22.0	27.8	----
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%

If there is a clear association between childrearing and working part-time or at home (domestic paid work or as housewife), there is not such a clear realization that for a significant proportion of women, childrearing does not limit their participation in the labor force, in terms of the work week, since they work for pay for 40 hours or more during the week (48% of all women in the survey, and 35% of Colombian women with children under five years of age).

For this group of working Colombian women (those who work 40 hours or more per week and have children under five years of age), 60% depend upon other household members' help, since other women or children in the household do not work outside. The other 40% of these mothers must use other resources, such as day care, to enable them to go to work.[33] Although childrearing limits women's participation in the labor force and increases women's burden, this is not a deterministic occurrence, and strategies are devised to reconcile the double roles of worker and mother.

Marital Status and Migration

If the sub-sample from the Fordham data on Colombian women with at least one year's residence in the U.S. who are over fifteen years of age is considered, as in Table 14, one notes that about 58.4% of the women's children were born in Colombia. Birth control is a common practice among Colombian middle class women (Leon de Leal, 1977), and I hypothesize that they do not significantly change their birth control practices when they come to the U.S. The child/mother ratio according to ages does not vary too much from that found among Colombians in Colombia, according to the Colombian literature (Ordóñez, 1981), an average of 2.3 children per mother.

Table 14: Women Who Arrived in the U.S. at Fifteen Years of Age or More, and Who Have Resided Here for at Least One Year

Present Age of Mother	Children, According to Birthplace			Mothers (%)	Ratio-Children: Mother
	Colombia	U.S.A.	N		
Under 20	100.0	-----	1	1.5	1
21-25	16.6	83.4	6	9.1	1
26-30	33.3	66.7	33	21.2	2.4
31-35	50.0	50.0	40	33.3	1.8
36-40	78.0	22.0	38	21.3	2.7
41-45	77.4	22.6	31	13.6	3.4
TOTAL	58.4	41.6	149	66	2.3

Women whose first child was born in Colombia, on the average, had this baby when they were about 23 years old. Similar behavior was found among those whose first child was born in the U.S. (average age, 24 years old).

In order to look for some possible relationship between migration and fertility behavior, we have prepared Table 15, in which the time interval between the last two births, according to mother's age, is presented. If we pay attention to the group of women who had their last child in the U.S., an interesting fact comes out: the high proportion of women for whom the interval between the last two children is large (seven to ten years) --21% of the Colombian mothers with more than one child; for another 24% of the Colombian mothers with more than one child, the last two had an interval of from four to six years between them.

Table 15: Interval Between Births of Last Two Children, According to Place of Birth of Last Child and Age of the Mother When the Last Child Was Born (%)

Age of Mother at Last Birth	Interval (years) Between Births of Last Two Children, According to the Place of Birth of the Last Child											
	Colombia						U.S.A.					
	only child	1-3	3-6	7-10	11+	total	only child	1-3	3-6	7-10	11+	total
Under 20	80.0	20.0	----	----	----	100%	80.0	20.0	----	----	--	100%
21-24	33.3	66.7	----	----	----	100%	100.0	----	----	----	--	100%
25-30	16.6	33.3	50.1	----	----	100%	5.3	52.6	21.1	21.0	--	100%
31-34	----	100.0	----	----	----	100%	11.1	15.8	10.5	15.8	--	100%
35-40	----	----	----	----	----	----	12.5	----	25.0	37.5	25.0	100%

These figures suggest a possible postponement of the last child. But there is no further data to discuss the hypothesis of a relationship between this behavior, postponement of the birth of the last child, with the migratory experience.

In the course of a woman's life, age is a strong delimiting factor. It is associated with selective cultural norms. Indeed, the probability of changes in marital status (from single to married, from married to separated or divorced, and remarriage) varies according to women's age at arrival. Of Colombian women who arrived at 25 years of age or older (survey data), about 95% of the women remained in the same marital status (single, married, or separated) after their arrival. So, if among single or separated women, as was found by Chaney (1980a) and myself in direct interviews, migration was idealized as a way to change their marital status, e.g. "to find a husband," these data suggest that this idealization does not materialize. Table 16 illustrates this finding.

Table 16: No Change in Marital Status (%)

Marital Status	No Change in Conjugal Status (%)	% of Women in Each Case
Married, with children	87.0	32.9
Married, without children	8.0	18.6
Single or separated or widows with children	60.0	14.3
Single or separated or widows without children	37.3	34.2 (100%)

Just 13% of the married women with children became separated or got divorced after coming to New York. For married women without children, the most common change was to have a child (61.0%). But 31% of these women without children got divorced or became separated (usually within one to two years of their arrival here). Of all the women who were married when they arrived, about 18% became separated or got divorced.

When we consider the status of single, separated, or widowed women we observed no significant cases of women who had children. About 58.5% of the single women got married, most before reaching 25 years of age.

Among women who were separated, it was common to find cases of women who migrated to the U.S. one or two years after separating from their husbands.

These data do not suggest a significant proportion of change in marital status after arrival, if age is controlled. In addition, data support the idea that migration is associated with personal-affective factors such as separation in Colombia. Cases of separation after arrival were also found in the sample, but there are no qualitative elements from the interviews to discuss the significance of these occurrences.

10. Undocumented Migrants: What This Means in the Woman's Case

According to Urrea's analysis of undocumented Colombian migrants in New York:

> "For both sexes, the difference in earnings between legal and illegal workers ranges between 21-24%. This salary differential is related to the occupational structure (blue collar operative and service workers) and the type of employment (manufacturing and services B) in which undocumented workers are found. Half of the undocumented female workers earn less than the minimum wage" (Urrea, 1982: Ch. 10).

The undocumented Latin American migration stream is the subject of growing attention in the specialized literature, and NACLA's study is outstanding for its structural prespective in combination with references to the undocumented migrant's life conditions (Badillo, DeWind, and Preston, 1979).[34]

The NACLA study's observations about undocumented Latin American migrant workers in New York provides a broader background regarding this issue. Regarding the amendments proposed by the Reagan administration for dealing with the questions of undocumented migrants, the NACLA report makes clear that the government's preoccupation with undocumented[35] workers are a recent issue, first raised about two years ago, although the question itself is an old one. In 1979,

> "the Department of City Planning of the Big Apple estimates there are at least 850,000 undocumented immigrants in the New York metropolitan area (a figure based, by official admission, on "intuition"), or one of every ten counted residents...Dominicans and Colombians, for example, are estimated to number 250,000 each, with perhaps half undocumented" (NACLA, 1979: 6).

Blaming migrants for the rise in unemployment rates, increasing expenditures in the welfare system, tax burden's wastage, and competition with legal residents for scarce jobs, and other accusations are supposed to be politically stimulated due to New York's fiscal crisis period and the present economic recession. These charges are not based on analysis, but indeed create what NACLA calls "scapegoats."

These accusations stigmatize undocumented aliens, and antagonisms between Colombian residents and undocumented migrants were registered in our interviews (see Urrea, 1982, Ch. 11). This stigma undermines self-esteem, reinforcing the "colonized syndrome," a feeling of inferiority which has concrete bases. "In one city subway station in the summer of 1979, an anonymous writer scrawled "Save taxes, deport illegal aliens" (NACLA, 1979: 6).

In Washington's Solidarity March, September 1981, against budget cuts by the Reagan administration, one leaflet read "Jobs for Americans. No more illegal alien competition."

But it is also stressed in studies already cited and in our interviews that legal and illegal migrants are mixed together, in the same family, in many cases.

There is no way to estimate the sex ratio among undocumented Colombian migrants, but it should be noted that we did not look specifically for undocumented migrants to be interviewed, and of twelve women interviewed, only three were legal residents, and at some period, they too had been illegal.

There are different ways to enter the U.S. -- with a tourist or student visa, or through clandestine paths. Some women's stories about their trips, in small unsafe airplanes from Medellin or some other point to the Bahamas, and then by boat to Miami, show their determination to escape from a combination of economic and cultural constraints, and to find new opportunities. In general, they do not feel that they have been treated differently than men in their attempts to achieve clandestine entry. But some women tell stories about sexual harassment during the trip.

Getting a tourist visa in the American Embassy in Colombia is becoming more and more difficult, and paying for illegal entry can cost two or three times more than coming legally. The first paychecks are usually used to pay debts incurred in order to come to the U.S.

> "The trip here through the Bahamas cost me 85,000 pesos, two years ago (about $US 1700), but they only took me to the island of Tripoli. When we got there, they asked for more money. I think that I paid about 200,000 pesos (about $US 4000) to get to Miami." (Eve)

> "I came through the Bahamas. That was a nightmare. I was the only woman among fourteen men. Some of them were drug smugglers. They talked about it. They were very tough with me. They made sexual advances. In the Bahamas, in the hotel, I couldn't sleep. I was lucky that an American drug smuggler protected me. The trip by plane took more than ten hours. In Panama, we took a second airplane to the Bahamas. This cost me about 54,000 pesos (about $US 1080). In the Bahamas, there were some problems. I don't know what they were, but we had to stay hidden. Well, this entire trip took fifteen days. A friend told me that his girlfriend was raped on one of these trips. I don't know for sure ...My mother is going back to Colombia by this same way. We're very worried..." (Lina)

There are some controversies about differences in life conditions between legal and illegal migrants. "Nothing in their social and economic backgrounds differentiated these workers from other Latin Americans who now live here legally" (NACLA, 1979: 12).

According to Figure 1 (pages 10-11), a general characteristic of the women interviewed is that there is no great difference in terms of occupation and income between legal and undocumented women workers. The differences we found are more related to time of residence, the size of the firm which employs women, and naturally, the type of occupation. In the garment industry, no large differences were found. (See the interview with Estela and Rosita, Appendix A.)

Firms like those in the garment industry, in which survival is to a great extent based on cheap labor, do not necessarily look for undocumented migrants and for women. Segregation is a structural constituent of the market's dynamics.

> "But the 50 interviews indicated that bosses weren't concerned whether an immigrant was undocumented or not. They wanted labor for "trabajo chiquito." Undocumented workers together with other immigrants in New York constitute a pool of labor for those jobs" (NACLA 1979: 17).

But in the perceptions of the women migrants, the residence visa -- the green card -- is considered basic to getting a better job. These women pointed out that illegality does not allow them to bargain for a better salary (NACLA, 1979).

Although structural factors, according to the general rules of exploitation of the secondary market, hold true, it cannot be forgotten that being undocumented contributes to the rate of exploitation of the worker.

"The bosses take a lot of things out of my pay check. I'm sure they don't pay them to the government." (María Fernández)

These are the observations Colombian migrant workers voice about their experiences as undocumented migrants:

"The legal situation has been very confused. Now I understand what's been happening to me. I don't feel like an undocumented person. I feel like I'm a person who has had to deny her own identity. I would say for survival. This hurts me very much. I can't be very sincere with people I become friends with. ...Once I knew a person who asked me my name and what I did. He helped me, but I never told him about my situation...In the beginning I was always very scared. I used to be so nervous when I saw the mailman, I thought he was from immigration. ...I understand why so many Latin Americans here do not talk about themselves, why people are so reserved here...Some do not want to say they don't have documents. Others do not want to say they work in restaurants when they were professionals in their own countries..." (Colombian woman, interviewed by the NACLA staff in 1979).

"My sister came nine years ago. She got married in order to get her visa. She had to pay a lot of money. I know some women who have problems with this. A friend of mine got married this way, and then the man wanted to have sex with her. Sexual harassment is common. Another woman has to leave a job because the foreman used to force himself on her and then told her he would call the "migra" ...This is a kind of rape. And I know of cases not only with Colombian women... I also know of a case of a woman who married an American, and she is living with him without any love...This is a business, but what can a woman do?...Well, they use their bodies, but we can't blame them, can we?...I'm really depressed about this situation. I have to go to Colombia, my grandmother's dying there...I have a Puerto Rican friend who said he would help me, but I'm afraid. He likes me, and I'm sure he'll insist that I have to live with him...

"My sister can help me get a visa, but later on, since she is still waiting for her American citizenship, but that is another problem. We are living together, because it's very expensive to live alone here, but we don't get along very well. She just lives for her work and to make money. Not me, I have other ideas...

"My lack of papers doesn't create many problems for me, in terms of amusements. Some people get paranoid. Listen, there are people who never leave Queens. They feel they're being persecuted in the subways and in the streets." (Eve)

"My sister has a resident visa. She got married to get it. But I'm afraid of getting married to get it. I already found some friends from Puerto Rico who said they would help me, I don't know...A year ago, when I got here, I used to be very scared about going out alone. Everyone used to say it was dangerous, that the police would get me. I don't work in factories, just in homes, as a domestic. Once, a policeman came to ask me something. I ran away and stayed home for a long time. Not any more. If they get me, what can I do?'

"The first thing I got was my social security card. It cost me $130. I had to borrow the money." (María Fernández)

"I think that since so many Colombians are illegal, nobody trusts one another. My brother left a job because a Puerto Rican co-worker challenged him and said he'd call the "migra" if my brother didn't leave the factory. They were fighting." (Eve)

"My husband and I got visas after I had a baby here. We were here with tourist visas for almost a year...Yes, to a certain extent we planned the baby with this intention." (María Ana)

"My husband and I have been here for eleven years as tourists. My children are in Colombia. If I had a visa, I wouldn't go so long without seeing them. We have already asked for visas. I think they'll give them to us, since we've been here so long...

"I go everywhere, but if I had a green card, I could get a better job. I worked almost four years in one factory that went broke. If I had my residence, I could get welfare." (Tulia)

"A friend tried to get married three different times to get his residence. But it failed, they kept finding out it was faked. This cost him almost $10,000... Blanca, my wife, arranged a marriage, through a lawyer. This cost her about $3300...No, I think they are right to be so demanding. This is their country. I'm an intruder, I'm taking a job from some other person." (Ananias)

At a certain analytical level, I agree with the NACLA study that "we can say that illegal status was a secondary aspect of their participation in the New York economy"(NACLA, 1979: 27). But when the analysis is extended to the discussion of levels of consciousness, another aspect comes out. Illegal migrants feel they are competing under unequal conditions, and this results in a fragmented perception of their own situation. Problems which they attribute to their lack of papers are not exclusively theirs — restricted access to education, lack of freedom to go where they want, obstacles to occupational mobility, etc. But to a great extent, they relate these constraints to their legal status.

Some issues are emphasized and seem to be more pronounced in the cases of undocumented women. Insecurity, as Eve says "You're here and you can be deported tomorrow. You don't feel you're entirely here." The possibility that the illegal status will be used for sexual harassment. Restriction of mobility, in terms of leaving the country, visiting their family, and bringing family members here to live with them (see Tulia's comments above, and those of Estela and María Fernández in the Appendices). They need to make what they consider to be normally private decisions -- to get married, or to have a baby -- in light of their public need to legalize their status (see María Ana's comments above). There is a growing instrumentalization of affective relations. As already noted, marriage of convenience is an arrangement that clashes with the cultural values of many women (see Estela's interview, Appendix A). These cultural values also challenge inter-sexual arrangements which were outside institutional patterns. As María Fernandez said, since her American boyfriend with whom she lives won't help her get her visa by marrying her, she feels that "something is broken."

Estela's description of the strip search she underwent in the Immigration Office, when she was arrested in the garment factory where she worked is not atypical of political mechanisms to shame women or to take advantage of their sexual condition (see Estela's interview in Appendix A). These women, who because of their social and

cultural upbringing do not really know how to function outside of the domestic sphere, are also more easily exploited by the lawyers who prey on the illegal migrants.

So even if, at the macro-structural level, being undocumented does not situate the labor force in a different position, this lack of legality does contribute to migrants' perceptions of themselves in the Big Apple, affecting all aspects of their daily lives.

11. Final Comments

In this final chapter, I want to elaborate on some assumptions concerning women's social reproduction:

1) The importance of differentiating women and paying attention to their positions in the family structure. For instance, for single women, for married women with or without children, for separated women with children, and for others, migration has different meanings. Here I have been concerned with some but not all of these types of women, and with a migrant stream which, simplifying somewhat, belongs to a specific class background, another basic factor which gives comprehensive strength to the concept of "migrant."

2) How the perception of the present situation is related to a combination of previous and present experiences. In the case of women, beyond analyzing the class positions, attention should be given to characteristics of the "sex gendered" societies in which they have been living. The women migrants I interviewed never "lived" entirely in the host society, and their comments about their present situations were commonly based on comparisons between New York and Colombia.

3) How experiences in the family and at work reinforce each other, without necessarily leading to ruptures or changes in the familial ideology or in the family as an organization, depending on a series of social factors. On the other hand, the patriarchal ideology of women's subordination is not restricted to certain organizations, such as the family. The rules of segmentation in the labor market incorporate this, and, for instance, income differences at the couple level are not questioned, but assumed as natural. The idea that woman's salary is complementary, oriented to childrearing, consumption at home, and help for the family abroad, allows no criticism of those differences in income, so that the husband continues to be considered as the "breadwinner."

4) If, in some way, the rules of the labor market reinforce family stability, they also allow changes in the intra-familial balance of power. Women's income, as pointed out in other studies, indeed allows women workers a broader potential or real autonomy. The way this autonomy will be used is related to other intra-familial alliances, such as the goal of improving the family consumption level, or of obtaining better education for the children. The use of autonomy will also depend on points of conflict, such as the intention to use the income for the woman's personal projects, e.g. studies. So in the relationship of family and work, attention must be given not only to the dynamics of conflicts and alliances inside the family, but also to the dynamics of the relationship of these members to outside institutions. The now old-fashioned idea of the family as a refuge from the outside world, and especially from working conditions, is still a basic tenet of the women interviewed during the course of my work in New York, who say that only in the family is some "creativity" or "autonomy" allowed.

Remarks on Sex and Consciousness Levels

As we have seen, migration is commonly evaluated positively as a way of making some money, at least enough to help support the family here and abroad, to be able to

buy what they want for their homes, and to pay for their children's future education. Single women praised migration for the greater autonomy or the ability to lead their sexual and personal lives away from the repression of their families. Married women also believe that their lives with their husbands have improved, since the men have their social spheres reduced.

The common inference that migrant women gain self-esteem and autonomy in relation to their spouses because they begin to earn more money is not completely supported in the cases of the Colombian women interviewed. It is possible that our findings result from the conjunction of unique factors, such as the fact that most of the Colombian wives in New York worked in Colombia. Of course, they earn more money here, comparatively, and they know this. But they look down upon their social position as workers, and, since at the intra-familial level they are still in inferior positions, earning less than their husbands, the sexual division of power is reinforced. This reinforcement comes from the sexual division of work in the labor market.

Married women who came with their husbands and children are not necessarily participants of induced migration. In many cases, they were the ones who insisted that the husband come, and they are commonly the ones most eager to stay (Chaney, 1980a).

Mothers' and wives' migratory plans are generally not individual ones. It is common to hear them say, "I came/I stay for better educational opportunities for my children" or "to improve 'our' /the family's/ level of living."

> "If I could do it over again, I would not come to New York. This is such an exhausting, boring job /in the garment industry/. But I am trying to bring my other son. I think when the family gets back together, things will be better." (Mercedes)

These migrant women, who do not evaluate situations in terms of themselves, but rather refer to the "others," "my husband," the "family," undergo somewhat worse working conditions than in Colombia (if the parameter of evaluation of working conditions is not salary).

Rosita used to work two jobs in order to bring her children, and after fourteen years in New York, she still works hard to help her teenaged children live in a separate apartment and go to the university (see Appendix A). María Ana moans about her work in a sweat shop sewing about 300 shirt sleeves in a badly lit room, in the company of, according to her, "dumb Salvadorean, Dominican, and Puerto Rican women." But she wants to stay in New York since the children will be able to go to the university and they can afford a "comfortable" home.

> "In Cali I worked in preventive medicine. I used to work with poor people. Nice people...They used to treat you with respect. They give you the respect that you deserve. Here everyone is the same in the factory...I want to stay. My husband says he would like to go back and start a business of his own. But we couldn't get used to Colombia again. We have a house with all the commodities, and in this country, if children have good school records, they can get scholarships at a good university." (María Ana)

So married women work to contribute to the "family budget" and the family level of living. Some contradictions were found, in some cases, in terms of deciding how to use the money earned by each spouse. But I would not classify them as conflicts, in terms of posing risks for the internal equilibrium of the family. Women and their husbands believe that the basic form of financial support is that which is supplied by the husband.

Analysis confirms a common observation of migration studies that the concept of family should not be restricted to the residential unit (Urrea, 1979). About 13% of the women interviewed in the Fordham survey had children in Colombia, and 38% of these were less than six years of age. Many Colombians in Queens send money to their relatives. For these people, migration is a strategy of family support and they evaluate it as such. Personal exhaustion is compensated by the feeling that it serves the family, and discrimination against women in the labor market is disguised by "total family salary." Many separations were related to the husband's refusal to perform his economic role for the family, but it should not be inferred that this is the only factor which destabilizes a family.[36]

Indicators of change in the inter-sexual relations of the family pointed out by Colombian wives usually focused on changes in the husband's behavior -- often changes forced by outside restrictions, such as exhaustion in the work place, the weather (it is said that in the winter, people do not even go out on weekends), and social isolation (few friends or relatives). "He helps me here because his friends can't see him." My observations are restricted to a point in time in the life histories of Colombian migrant women. Thus it is difficult to say that these women's intra-familial changes are structural ones.

Isolation is commonly used to define their present situation. This isolation leads to the reflection that although the Big Apple was their goal, Colombian women migrants live in only a part of it, a very restricted part, at that.

This isolation is partially reinforced by the ideology of elitism which they developed in Colombia. They look down upon their female Hispanic co-workers, and even among Colombians, their social relations are restricted.

The spreading stigma of Colombians being involved in the drug trade contributes to segregation within the Colombian community. This stereotype is reinforced by the North American mass media. Competition for jobs and fear of getting involved with undocumented aliens, or having their status as illegals used against them (since the immigration laws encourage informing on illegal aliens) are other factors which contribute to their self-imposed isolation. Although they do not say so in so many words, there is a feeling that even with legal residence, they are foreigners and, some think, outcasts. Americans are doing them a favor by allowing them to stay here, and in order to secure the situation they have obtained, laws should be respected, and other Colombians should be distrusted since they are potential competitors. The literature on migration stresses networks and mutual aid among migrants. This was also found in my interviews, but it is just one side of the coin. The wider society demands competition, and conflicts are part of the dynamics of social life.

This research project did not have enough resources to allow an in-depth investigation of one basic theme, that of internal solidarity among Colombians. My hypothesis is that more reflections are necessary before talking about a "Colombian community" (Chaney, 1980a).

In terms of intra-familial relations, if married Colombian women are optimistic about the effects of immigration on their husband's behavior, they also worry about their children's outside socialization. Findings similar to those reported by Chaney (1980a) were observed in my interviews with Colombian women. Mothers commonly worry about changes in their children's behavior and values because of their school contacts with American and other Hispanic children. Since in the cases I investigated women generally had few contacts with the North American part of New York society, many of their parameters must be based on stereotypes. Common value judgments

about the North American family were used to express their fears about their children's socialization: "excessive freedom allowed by American parents," "lack of commitment to the family," "no respect for traditions," and "lack of respect and affection for their parents."

Relations between children and mothers is another theme not investigated in-depth in this project. But we have emphasized that the child's future, chiefly in terms of their educational opportunities, is a common element in women's perceptions of their migratory experiences.

Remarks on Ethnicity and Consciousness Levels

Although discussions about why migrants do not return to their home countries often refer to the living situation and to economic and cultural constraints in Colombian society, we have documented evidence that supports Piore's thesis that those who stay do not necessarily believe that they have already become successful in the United States (Piore, 1980). The lack of viable alternatives and "inertia" also reinforce the decision to stay. Another observation by Piore is also pertinent, that the migrant's common plans for a return at a future date are not always carried out. Few admit that they will not go back, or that they intend to remain here forever. Few do not have links with Colombian society. But what kinds of linkages, and with what Colombian society?

Colombian newspapers were not commonly read by the women I interviewed.[37] Few were interested in, or knew anything about, the presidential campaign which was underway in Colombia during the period of these interviews. They talk about violence, political and police repression, guerrillas, but most often, they just talk about the "deteriorating" situation in Colombia in general terms.

At the same time, all of them maintain constant contact by mail and by telephone with their relatives and closest friends who have remained there. "I am here, but I live there since I am always thinking about them /her children, who remained in Colombia/." (Tulia)

Those who admit thay do not intend to go back are generally eager to bring family members and to encourage their friends to migrate here. This orientation is not always shared by husband and wife, and it can become a point of conflict.

Indeed, since lower middle class people -- especially women -- are restricted to concerns about "their world," it is natural that the Colombian society of reference is the one in which their relatives and friends live. It is natural that their "national roots" and "ethnic identity" are narrowly referred. Music, food, memories of the Colombian landscape, and regional character, for instance, are a strong material basis for their feelings of belonging to a specific ethnic group.

When we analyze the meanings of "we Colombians are different" or "we used to be..." and so on, the parameter is commonly one region, or one specific social group.

"We used to be respected there..." (Tulia)

"I couldn't take just any kind of job. We were people with a certain position..." (Estela)

"The 'rollos' /a regional expression for people from Bogotá/ are rather metaphysical. Colombian men are phonies ("mamadores de gallo"), and they like to talk without compromise, about their existence. No, these gringos are very serious and objective. Yes, Colombian men are very 'macho' but I miss the relationships with them." (María Fernández)

"In Bogotá, people have culture...People from La Costa are lazy...We 'paisas' /from Antioquía/ are used to working hard..." María Ana)

"No, we don't have any friends here. These Colombians who live here, you don't know where they come from." (Helena)

The working situation and its rules of competition endanger ethnic solidarity, but I must note that even in the original country, this ethnic identity is influenced by class differences. Although they are now blue collar or service workers, the women interviewed still see themselves as members of the middle class. Their ideological references are based on this idealized class position. Elitism is a common feature of this self-image, and it clearly interferes in their perceptions of their situation in the American society in which they live.

Question: "Do you think there is discrimination against Colombians in New York?"

Julio: "The 'gringos' don't pay attention to Latins. They despise us, but I think few Colombians perceive it. Colombians who live in Queens are conservative. I know few Colombians here who have Puerto Rican or black friends.

"I'm studying at Queens College. Few of my Colombian friends have Puerto Rican or black girlfriends...I used to have a black girlfriend, and my friends said that I'd turned into an African...

"At school, my Latin friends say that it's great ('una berraquera') to have a North American girlfriend. But this isn't common. American girls like another kind of music. They have their own customs, and they come from a society in which status is very important, and we Latins have a lower ('más bajito') status.

"Hispanics feel they are inferior. Among them, there are mutual recriminations, such as comments that Puerto Ricans live on welfare, that Colombians are involved with drugs..."

María Ana: "I don't think there is discrimination. Americans treat Hispanics well. I don't know anyone in this borough. We've lived here for six years... It's just a hello, a smile in the fruit store...In this borough, there are Chinese, Cubans, Irish, and Colombians. The people who live here are decent. Here, in this neighborhood, there are no robberies. When a black person is hanging around the supermarket, they tell you to be careful...

"At work /a sweatshop in the garment district/ there are only Hispanic women, but I don't talk freely with them. Perhaps because we are from different countries. They're different. They're more used to that work...And although the place is small, there's a lot of disagreements among the workers. People fight for work -- we do piecework You want to work faster than the others. They tell jokes about your country. Maybe in a bigger factory things would be worse. I don't know..."

Eve: "In Queens /Queens Boulevard, Forest Hills/, I have no Colombian friends. This area has more Americans and Jews.

"Of course Americans discriminate against Hispanics. Look, in the subway they don't even look at you. I don't believe people are reading, they are just hiding...They don't like you to bump into them...Oh, all those 'excuse me's' and 'I'm sorry's' are just ways they keep their distance...You simply don't exist for them. They ignore you.

"I live all alone. At work people are so vulgar and the men don't respect the women. They are Puerto Ricans and Dominicans, and they say vulgar

things to you. I try to keep away from them. I know this isn't their fault, they come from poorer backgrounds. But it's hard to get along with them on a day-to-day basis.

Eve: "My friends are from other parts of the city. I seem to live in two worlds. My friends are students, artists..."

Lina: "I have a lot of Colombian friends. Well, not necessarily friends, here you can't trust people like you do in Colombia. No American friends, because of my poor English. I know them at high school. They are workers, accountants... It's not fair to treat Colombians as if they we're all involved with drugs. It's discrimination. But all the Americans I know, like for instance my employers /she is a domestic worker/, they treat me very well."

Levels of Consciousness and Social Reproduction: Work vs. Life

Once more I must emphasize that there is no basis upon which to evaluate changes observed in intra-familial relationships (in the case of married women), such as gains stimulated by women's consciousness about their rights, and the activities which force less asymmetrical relations.

"There is no time to waste. We don't have relatives here. Weekends are for cleaning, washing, and going out with the children and going to mass. My husband and I are more together here. We live for work and for our family." (author's emphasis.)

QUESTION: "Maria, you said you used to work part-time. Do you like spending more of your time at home, taking care of the house? Your children are grown up /9 and 12 years/. Do you really think it's necessary to stay home with them?"

"Well, when you have children and live in a foreign country, you have to take care of them. In Colombia I had my mother and sisters. They used to help me. When we came, my husband asked me to dedicate myself to taking care of the children. He can work peacefully, because he knows I work near our home and I'm with the children...

"Every once in a while I feel bored. I feel like I'm a servant ('sirvienta'). But I think this is more because I am not working at what I like /she is a nurse/. I don't need to work, but now the children go to school and I'm bored. And I've always had my own money. This way I can give more things to the children, clothes or toys, and I can get things for my home. I'm also sending money to my mother, about $100 a month. Yes, you're right, I'm thinking about continuing my studies. I'd like to find a way to revalidate my diploma here, but I'm lazy...I can't study any more." (María Ana)

Married women's spheres of activity are still reduced. Married women are not used to going out alone or with their female friends, to using their time to study, or to filling it with activities other than housework. In general, their values about sexuality are still very similar to those found among Colombian women in Colombia (Garcia Castro, 1982).

"When he wants sex, it's okay. I don't care one way or another about it..."

"I just go out alone to go shopping or to go to work..."

"I grew up 'knowing' that women belong to their homes..."

"American women seem to like to stay out. Children don't obey their parents. We're different. We're Colombians, people concerned with our families."

"Sure, I like it here, but I want my children to grow up in the Colombian style..."

As I commented earlier, I did not have time to focus more on the mother-child relationship, but my hypothesis is that at least at the family level, there is a strong orientation toward reproducing the Colombian cultural patterns of the parents.

Another hypothesis is that migration is a strategy to get the most of what the Big Apple can offer a Hispanic migrant. And this is related to making money. This goal reduces the critical perspective and interferes in all dimensions of migrants' lives.

Because of their working conditions and ideology of making money, husbands and wives are indeed less unequal. They are both workers. The family budget and the externally- and internally-produced isolation reinforces the mutual affective and instrumental dependence between spouses.

In summary, changes observed by me, as well as those mentioned by married women migrants in intra-familial relationships, are not necessarily a result of women's struggle for less subordination and more autonomy. To some extent, these changes have been caused by the prevailing conditions of migrant labor force exploitation and the reification of personal relations. These relationships are mediated by the goal of working more to make more money, and by the isolation of the wife and husband caused by elitist ideology, strongly reminiscent of their middle class position in Colombia.

Married women came with crystalized values, and in most cases live in a Colombian style of family and in a social environment that favors segregation. Contacts between women are generally limited to countrywomen, the majority of whom they already knew in Colombia.

Even single women had few contacts with North Americans. The lack of English and the social and cultural differences between Colombian women and their co-workers concur to isolate Colombian women from other women, from Americans, from Hispanics, and even from Colombians. Competition, distances, lifestyles, and work burdens(including the double burden) are other factors which reinforce this isolation.

I have been stressing that formation of consciousness is influenced by past experiences. Naturally, one has to keep in mind that the majority of my interviews were with women who had recently arrived (within the past five years). But Rosita and Estela's experiences are no different from those of more recent migrants. Even though they have been here for more than eight years, they were already over thirty years of age when they came. The age at time of arrival, as well as the time of residence, must be kept in mind.

Another point to remember when discussing Colombian migrant women's consciousness level is the social environment in which they live. According to Sassen-Koob (1979), Colombian associations in Queens (there are about sixteen of them) are of the instrumental type, oriented to professional interests (such as one for doctors), to charities, and to sports (e.g., soccer). They were characterized as "elite organizations"(Sassen-Koob, 1979), of people reduced to the middle class, within the North American class system. At work, trade union participation is nothing more than taking advantage of the help offered (chiefly medical benefits). I did not observe significant alternatives which would allow Colombian women to associate with other Colombian women, or with other North American women.

Their commitment to their work is an instrumental one, and this is seen as a temporary phase of their lives. They neither feel, nor are they treated, as if they belong to the community where they live.[38]

Their situation as undocumented aliens also reinforces their ambiguous placement in the host society, and their relations with others.

With these objective constraints, and reinforced by their ideological inheritance, it would be difficult to expect them to overlap the cognitive level of their consciousness with their actual situation. Although in a different form, proper to the new context, the identities of these women are socially reproduced.

María Fernández belongs to a new Colombian organization, the Committee for Human Rights in Colombia. Like other organizations, this one is not well-known throughout the "Colombian community." Their major concern at present is human rights in Colombia. They denounce torture and the economic and political situations in Colombia. She and other members believe that with time the Committee must expand its focus to include the present situation of Colombians in New York. At present, she is unaware of any association that focuses on the working conditions of Colombians, on the needs of Colombian women, or on the concerns of illegal immigrants.

We have been discussing the formation of consciousness among married Colombian women migrants. What about the women who migrate alone? In terms of their gender identity, for these women migration itself formed part of a process of reaction against, or a level of female consciousness about, their oppression at the cognitive level. As commented by Lina, María Fernández (in Appendix B), and Eve, among others, they came because of economic pressures, but it was also important for them to get away from direct family repression and community censure. These women are generally more concerned with individual plans when they discuss the meanings of migration. They talk about their plans to study and to travel, and, in spite of their clear differences, all of them are more critical of their working conditions in the garment industry, in domestic services, etc. They agree that they need money to maintain their sexual autonomy, and their life style in general, but they question the price they have to pay for this autonomy -- the exhausting and draining conditions in the workplace.

So according to each woman's perspective, gains or "autonomy" here can be measured in terms of optimism or reservations.

Lina is a domestic worker. She is finishing her high school equivalency degree and has made a lot of Hispanic friends. She has many plans and intends to study interior decoration. According to her, this will be easy /she has not yet looked into admissions procedures and the cost of tuition/, if she can get her permanent resident visa, since she is still undocumented.

Eve works in a jewelry factory. She is learning to be a diamond cutter, but she receives less than the minimum wage. She would like to resume the university studies which she quit while she lived in Colombia. But she is not optimistic about it:

> "Perhaps in Colombia things would be better. But many changes would have to occur. And how? My family is poor. The schools there are not any good. I want to study, but I don't know how to manage it. Education is a myth in this country. Tuition is very high. How can a person who works in a factory afford schooling? I need a scholarship, but to get one, I have to be legal...
>
> "Here I am freer. There everyone in my family used to pressure me...'Where are you going? Why are you coming back so late?' And so on..,Well, but what can I do with this freedom with all the other limitations?...When you move away, you have to be responsible for your things. This is good, but life here is very hard.
>
> "I send money to my family in Colombia. I don't earn much where I work. No

friends where I live, no friends at work. I used to go out on the weekends, to Soho, to Manhattan...I made friends with students, artists...I used to feel I was growing stupid in those factories. Now I am taking a dance class and an English class...I try...I don't want to live with my sister, and I don't want to live like her and other Colombian women I know. They don't live. They just work. (author's emphasis.)

"Relationships between women and men are very difficult here. I've never had North American friends because I don't speak much English...I don't know...And Hispanic men are so 'macho.' They're still looking for women either as future wives or to take to bed...Perhaps the problem is mine. I'm not looking for a husband, but just for affection. They only respect their mothers and their wives.

QUESTION: "Like Marys and Eves, right?"

"Yes, that's it. They really do continue to look at women as either sinful Eves or holy Marys...

"But I feel that I do have a lot of opportunities here, once I overcome my limitations, the language, the visa...

"What depresses me here are the human relationships. It is so hard to make friends here. Colombian people who come here aren't the same as they are in Colombia. Here people just want to make money."

Single and separated women commonly refer to their Hispanic boyfriends as having the same values and behavior regarding women and other men that they had when they were in Colombia.

"I think men change, but not for the better. Here they have a lot of girlfriends. It's easier for them. There they used to be more respectful." (Lina)

To a great extent, migrants' living conditions are accepted because of their expectations for the future, because of the ideology of accessibility. Obstacles to personal mobility goals are the visa, learning English, and getting some skills. The structural constraints which these obstacles disguise are not recognized.

Migration itself contributed to changes in ways of living and was part of a movement toward change. But there are many more questions than simple answers in the process of woman's liberation, and not just in Latin America. Class-exploitation and sex-oppression are connected. "Possible consciousness" for women migrants is made more complex by the heritage of their experiences in Colombia. This is true for all women, no matter what their marital status is. "Possible consciousness" is also limited by the solitude, the isolation, of these women, regardless of their marital state.

The women I interviewed did not belong to or know of any women's associations. In New York there are some organizations for Hispanic women, such as the Hispanic Women's Center, the ACACOPRO (for Puerto Rican women), and the Alianza (Hispanic Women in Brooklyn). Some locals of the ILGWU, in the garment industry, hold sporadic programs -- seminars on legal matters, support networks, and so on -- for Hispanic woman union members. But as Chariza Collazo, coordinator of the Hispanic Women's Center, commented, there is a lack of information channels accessible to Hispanic women; the activities of the Center are more accessible to bilingual women, and working conditions and home responsibilities are obstacles to many women's participation.[39]

Work and Life

Migrant women state clearly how life and work are separated in their cases. There is a growing consciousness about the exploitation they endure at the work place, and how their sex limits them as workers, in the perceptions of the people and industries they work for.

> "Colombian men and women have tough jobs here. But the women's jobs are worse. In the garment industry they say they prefer women because we know how to sew. I never sew...and I am not sure they really prefer women. The Colombian men I know don't look for jobs in the garment industry." (María Fernández)

The desire for consumer goods and the myth of an "open society" where "everyone can study" influences perceptions about life for some. For others, like Eve and María Fernández, for instance, these parameters are already questions, and their remarks contribute to other reflections.

For Lefebvre, capitalist cities centralize the qualities of "places of consumption" and "consumption of the place" (Lefebvre, 1969).

As already observed, consumption is a strong influence on migrants' perceptions of the quality of their lives and in their possibilities of staying in New York. But few have broad access to consumer goods, even in terms of car or home appliances. The consumption they refer to is commonly potential, what one can get, and is evaluated in comparison with what a lower middle class person could afford in Colombia.

"Consumption of the place" is also idealized. Amusements are restricted, and Colombian migrants cannot afford all the seductions of the Big Apple. A great part of their lives is consumed in articulating home and the workplace. Many of the Colombian women interviewed, especially those who are single or separated, are aware of the risk of self-consumption in this game. The consumption of the self and the "monetization" of social relations is associated with working for a standard of living. These women are also conscious of the "arrangements of the sex gender system" that surrounds them. They are fighting for different man-woman relations, and they are aware they have a broader burden of exploitation in the labor market because they are treated as subordinates. They are trying, at a personal level, to get out.

Eve refused some proposals of marriage which would allow her to have a visa but which would also limit her to a relationship she did not want; María Fernández is studying painting and participates in political organizations. According to her, it is hard since she works in the garment industry and her American boyfriend does not support her decision to study art, since for him, "painting is a thing of bourgeois people." These and other Marys and Eves are fighting, and migration for them is a way of fighting.

In Conclusion

I have hypothesized that Colombian women's perceptions of their actual conditions are mediated by their past experiences in Colombia, in such a way that their "possible conscience" is limited to their consciousness level about women's situations here and in Colombia, and their related specificities.

With this logic, I have argued that differences in salary or in the "value" of money between the two countries, and the greater restriction of the husband to the family sphere, as well as less direct[40] family repression of women's behavior (single

or separated women) contribute to a positive evaluation of the migratory experience. But the same logic supports the comment that women's decisions to migrate are arrived at through holistic considerations in which not only economic matters are weighed. For some women, their plans are not oriented only by their desire for a "better salary." Criticism of working conditions and recognition of linkages between these working conditions, other societal barriers, and their daily living conditions as social limits on their ability to enter certain spheres, groups of friends, etc., are present when they talk about themselves.

At a certain level, life and work are separated, or as Mercedes pointed out, "Here it's good for work, to earn money. There, it's good to live. I miss my friends." Yet complaints about changes in human relationships, growing lack of free time, and affective arrangements suggest a beginning toward reunification of these images, and for some women, the life they endure is conditioned by the situation in which they work.

Women are usually considered to be more consumption-oriented than men, and in truth, many of our interviewees praised American society for the diversity of things available and the ease of buying these products. This is a significant parameter that fits their middle class ideology, but instead of "blaming the victims" for this orientation, we should place it in the context of culturally-structured gender. Woman's objectification and her object-orientation are not separated. It is not by chance that women, more restricted to the home, are more concerned with supporting a higher consumption level. But their references to the "dehumanization" of their relationships here, the lack of intimate contacts among friends -- colloquial relations are replaced by instrumental ones -- indicates that they are becoming conscious of their self-consumption.

What do critical perceptions mean, in terms of stimulating "rebellion," or in other words, where are these women in terms of social consciousness?

The actual conditions I observed do not support optimistic inferences. In addition, in this project there have been many issues which have not been discussed. We need more studies of existing associations, and the potential of new organizations concerned with Hispanic people; better identification of points of resistance to the placement of Hispanics in American society; unions' and civic associations' policies and practices regarding migrants -- specifically women migrants; more long-term observations of women in other situations, such as those who are not "heads of household;" and the mother-child relationship.

At this stage of knowledge, my general impression is that the women I interviewed are to a great extent by themselves in their individual processes of "female consciousness formation" (Rowbotham, 1977) and attempts to alter women's social reproduction inertia. This is intimately articulated with their lower middle class identities which still persist in spite of their new class position. In that process of "consciousness formation," one went as far as the possible alternatives allow, while others stayed where they were. The involvement of these Marys and Eves in expanding these alternatives goes beyond their isolated efforts.

Discussions of Mary's and Eve's social reproduction as workers and as women in the Big Apple requires more reflections about the host society itself, such as the life conditions of women and workers. As demonstrated, Colombian migrant women are largely restricted to Hispanic environments and a reduced labor market, or to a very limited part of the Big Apple, and the influences of American women's way of living are not easily perceived. But this expression, "American women" is also an abstraction, and more qualifications about it are needed.

Migration itself is insufficient to stimulate changes in the process of women's social reproduction. At one level, familial ideology and traditional familial organization are still present in this first migrant wave. Their original social position influences these women. At another level, Eve and other single women who try to get away from those familial parameters are usually faced with fighting a lonely struggle. There were changes, but as Rowbotham points out: "The point is to change those conditions, not to make a virtue out of small personal triumphs over adversity" (Rowbotham, 1977: xiv).

Appendix A

Interview with Rosita and Estela

general data

Rosita and Estela are sisters. They are both from Colombia, and they had always lived there prior to coming to the U.S. Rosita is 49 years old, and Estela is 51. Both completed junior high school (tercero bachillerato). Rosita was 20 when she got married, and Estela was 17.

Rosita began working at a women's clothing store when she was 17. She got married, and when she was 21, she had her first child and stopped working in order to "raise the child." The first time Estela worked for wages was after she came to the U.S.

Rosita and Estela are two of seven children -- six women and one man, and all "very close." Rosita has already brought two other sisters to New York, and she has filed petitions to bring the other two.

In Colombia, their father worked on a farm, while their mother lived with them in Bogotá. Rosita was the first to immigrate 16 years ago (1965). She was widowed at age 33, with five children, and she migrated eight months later.

decision to migrate

ROSITA: "One of my brothers-in-law, who lived in the United States, told me that things would be better for me here...My husband left me a car but little else...All of my children were in good schools...My husband was also a bookkeeper. We had used the car as a taxi...but as I know little about cars, I didn't do very well. I passed the car on to my brother so that he could finish the payments, and I went to live with another sister...Then I left a child with each of my sisters and I came here alone..."

documentation

She came as a tourist. An in-law's brother, who worked in an opera house, helped her get work in the garment industry.

first job

ROSITA: "Twelve years ago he helped me get my social security card. After that, I got some work in a factory...

"I was afraid of everyone because I didn't have papers. A friend of a cousin felt sorry for me. I cried once in front of him...He said he would marry me so that I could bring my children here. He was a Colombian who had his residence. He never asked me for anything ...Three years later, he got seriously involved with a woman...And, with my residence, I was able to bring my children here. He helped me bring each and every one of the kids...No one knew he had married me, not even his mother...I gave him a present of $400, but he didn't ask for it." [1970 $US]

Three years later she married a U.S. citizen. There were no complications.

working conditions

ROSITA: "I started working in 'el garment.' I worked two jobs so that I could bring my children. I worked in 'el garment' from 8:00 to 4:30. I got another job cleaning offices from 6:00 to midnight. I would get home around 1:00 and I got up at 6:00 in the morning to

cook. All of this so the children could go to school...Nobody helped me. In 1967, one was 9, the girl was 16, and the others were 11, 10 and 6. They stayed at home by themselves."

Estela came to the U.S. in 1973. She helped take care of Rosita's children. Estela left Colombia because she had bought a car which she couldn't pay for.

decision to migrate

ESTELA: "I borrowed the money to buy a car. I couldn't keep up with the payments and I had to pay interest. I came here thinking I would stay for about six months."

But after she had been gone for about two months, someone wrote to her sister saying that Estela's husband was going out with another woman and that she was pregnant. They said Estela should go back to Colombia.

ESTELA: "I thought to myself, 'I'm not going to be a slave like other women. I think differently.' At home I had everything I needed...I had a maid and never had to work...I went to church every Sunday and prayed to the Virgin to tell me what to do...

"When I lived there he probably had other women, but no one ever caught him...He always was and still is very discrete in his actions... I decided to stay here. I lost everything...When I came, the children, the three of them, were 22, 21 and 11. They stayed there with my husband and his girlfriend and the maid...

"I began to work here, to send money home to pay the interest on the car loan...Time went on, I stayed here, I was working in the same factory as Rosita...I went to live with Rosita. But after a year, how should I say it, I would come home from work and the kids always messed up the apartment. They'd wake me every day...They called me names because I told her what they were doing...I decided I'd be better off if I became independent. For three years I've been living by myself, with a Nicaraguan woman...Rosita and I still work in the same factory. Making jackets. Rosita had the same job in Colombia. Not me, I learned here."

QUESTION: "Are working conditions the same here as in Colombia?"

ROSITA: "The work is faster, the work load is heavier here. I work making pockets, and I only make pockets. In Colombia I did a little bit of everything, speading the material, making collars. It was easier there...Here they want speed, and the work is very boring."

the "migra"

One day INS agents went to the factory and they got Estela.

ESTELA: "I had been here for about four years. I had never worried about this. I always thought I'd do what everyone says to do. There was an emergency door, an exit close to where I worked. I always thought that if the migration people came, I would turn off my machine and run for the door...But no, they came up to me and showed me a badge, and said to me in Spanish, 'I'm from the Immigration Department. Do you want to show me your papers?' At that time, I didn't even have a social security card...I was using a cousin's social security card. So I said I didn't have any papers...They said to go with them. They said not to worry, that everything would be straightened out

at their office. They said they wouldn't send me back to Colombia.

"They took sixteen of us. Men and women from different countries. When we got there, they questioned us, they took our pictures and our fingerprints. And of the sixteen, only three of us had to stay, two Haitians and myself...The others had already started their paperwork, they had lawyers working for them...For me they set bail that would let me stay a bit longer, but they set bail at $3,500."/1977 $US/

ROSITA: "She called me...She called me and told me what happened... She'd lent me money and I was going to Colombia almost the next day. I'd used the money. So I cancelled the trip..."

ESTELA: "They had me for five days. They generally treated me well. But the first thing they do when they get you, they take you off to a small room. There must have been some 25 of us women. In front of everyone, there were four women who must have been police, they tell everyone to strip...They searched our clothes...Then they ordered us to bend over and spread our legs. Where they couldn't see, they probed with their hands...They say this is to look for drugs...But what are they thinking of? They'd just arrested us while we were at work...And I was the first, I didn't know what was going on, I couldn't even imagine such a thing...The first one doesn't know what to expect and I was the first...I was so embarrassed..."

lawyers

ROSITA: "I went to see a lawyer on 14th Street. I started to fill out the papers with the secretary, I was crying and I told her that I had five children. I was crying, and do you know what this young women told me? She said the old man was going to steal my money... She said to go to another lawyer...Later, I had a friend from work, he knew about this lawyer, he'd read about him in the Spanish newspapers, and we went there to get back my sister's passport...My friend threatened to denounce the lawyer to the police if he didn't give back the passport and my money immediately...Anyway, the lawyer kept about $50 and gave me back her papers. I went to another lawyer... and I went with him to the Immigration. They took $2,500 and the lawyer charged me $250. They let her out and gave her permission for two more months. But if she didn't leave within two months, I would lose the money.

"At the end of two months, the friend who took me to the lawyer's ...said that since he was a bachelor, he would help us. But her problem was different, I was a widow, but she was married...The lawyer helped us...Since I was planning to go to Colombia anyway, when I went I took a paper for Estela's husband to sign for the divorce... He signed the document without knowing that it had to do with a divorce. For him it was a formality so that Estela could stay in the U.S..."

It finally took four years for Estela to receive her residence visa.

values and reality

ESTELA: "I married Rosita's friend within a month. Everything was in order. You give the Immigration Department a copy of the marriage documents...Because of the investigations they were making, I had to go live with him, a lie...I paid him $2,800 and, since I didn't really marry him, I asked him to sign a contract. Because I had my three children with me, and I didn't want to give them a bad example. Our parents taught us very differently, and I wasn't going to give my

relatives any excuse to gossip about me. I paid half the rent, I cooked my own food, and I went to my job, while he went to his job and cooked his own meals. We didn't have anything to do with one another...

problems in legalizing status

"INS came to our house...They called us to their offices to question us...They questioned us ten different times. They asked about our daily lives, they asked me how my husband treated me... Every time they asked us our address and the telephone number, and they asked to see our keys, to see if they matched...

"Several times he tried to get me to go to bed with him...We fought about that...In Colombia they thought I was married...We are still married, but I moved out as soon as I got my residence."

documented vs undocumented - working conditions

QUESTION: "Have your working conditions gotten any better since you've gotten your residence visa?"

ESTELA: "I've been working in the same place since I got here...I'm thinking about looking for a new job. I've been working at the same place for nine years now. It seems to me that they pay better when you have a green card...When I got here, they paid me $95, in '73. Now I do piecework ...and get $230 or $240 a week..." [Their own income did not change much when they legalized their status.]

ROSITA: "I work by the hour. I get $7.76 an hour...I get about $214 a week take-home pay...I've been working in that factory for eleven years..."

working conditions

ESTELA: "I prefer piecework. According to your ability, and depending on the type of work, it's better. I've seen with my co-workers that it depends on the machine you use. I use a Singer sewing machine. Some of the others use Merrows...and make $400 a week gross with $300 take-home pay...These machines are faster and you can do more work each day...In the same work I do, some of the women make more than I do. I make about $47 a day, and some of them make as much as $60... But I've had ten operations, and I can't work any faster...

budget distribution

"I send money to Colombia, because I'm supporting my youngest daughter."

intra-family relations

ROSITA: "I pay for my children's apartment, I prepare their food, and do everything for them...They have their own apartment...They study, they don't work...Three or four times a week, I have to straighten up their apartment...

"More than anything else, I got married because of the frustration of trying to take care of the kids...The kids complained about not having nice clothes, they used to skip classes two or three times a week...My son got married...I told them that the first time a man came near me, someone who could pay for the food and take care of me, I was going to get married...Then I met my husband...He worked nights as a security guard...He seemed to be an excellent person, and me, without speaking English, I married him...I've been married to John for three years..."

migration evaluation

QUESTION: "In what ways have your lives changes since you came to the United States?"

ROSITA: "If I had stayed there, none of the children would have stayed in school..."

QUESTION: "But <u>your</u> life, Rosita?"

ROSITA: "I've always had to work, but I've managed to give my children a better chance in life..."

QUESTION: "But Rosita, you keep talking about your children...We want to know about <u>your</u> life."

ROSITA: "My life would be the same thing no matter where I lived. Work is work no matter where you go..."

QUESTION: "And you, Estela?"

ESTELA: "I would have stayed a housewife. I wouldn't have to work. Here I have my own money to spend...I want to buy a house in Colombia. But I'm not going to live there...There are some people I don't want to see..."

QUESTION: "How's life here in your free time, for going out? Is it easier to have a good time here or there?"

ROSITA: "It's better there..."

ESTELA: "Sure, it's better there. The way people are, the tranquility. Here people are always in such a hurry..."

ROSITA: "Here, nobody would know if I was dying...Here no one knows about anyone else...You just work here..."

ESTELA: "...For example, there where I lived, half the people in the neighborhood were my friends...There people appreciate one another. Here everyone's the same...For example, there where I work, the bosses feel that they're the same as any of the workers...There it's different...You have respect for people who are educated..."

QUESTION: "And do you think that that's better?"

ESTELA: "Well, as far as I'm concerned, there are certain distinctions...respect...Yes..."

social life

QUESTION: "Who are your friends here?"

ROSITA: "My husband [64 years old] doesn't really have many friends. He doesn't have any family except for his two sons. They are the only visitors..."

ESTELA: "I'm always thinking about Colombia...My problems, what I should do...I can't even concentrate on trying to learn English... Right now I have a problem that few people have...There in Colombia, my youngest daughter got pregnant and had a baby.. She's a failure... Two years ago, as soon as I got my residence, I filed an application for her to come...She was pregnant. We wanted her to have the baby here. They baby would have been a U.S. citizen...But in Colombia, the U.S. Consulate started to investigate her case. That was in October. The baby was born in December...Since we were processing the application there instead of here, it took over a year...They've finally said that they'll give her a visa, but they won't give one to the baby...Because I don't have the right to bring grandchildren, just my daughter...I can't understand this...How am I going to separate the mother from her child?...How do I resolve this?...I want her to come. I live alone!...I've been alone for nine years...

Colombian situation-evaluation

"If she were here, she could work and study. She can't do that there...There people study, they graduate, but there's no work...In an office in Colombia, to get a job cleaning, sweeping floors, you have to have a high school degree...And there's not even that kind of work...And I've been told recently that to study in one of the universities, you have to pay 40,000 pesos per semester."

OTHER PERSON: "But it's expensive here, too. Here it costs $150 or $160 a credit..."

amusements

QUESTION: "Where do you go to have a good time...Do you go to Manhattan, do you stay here in Queens?"

ESTELA: "Have a good time? Me?...Sometimes on weekends I come here. Lots of times I stay home and do housework, mend clothes...In the summer we go to the beach..."

QUESTION: "Why don't you go out more?"

ESTELA: "...I don't have friends here. I live alone..."

QUESTION: "And the fact that you live alone, that you're away from your family, doesn't this give you more personal freedom?"

ESTELA: "Yes, but since we're not used to going out, to having men friends...in these things, no...We haven't changed our lives...We have a few friends and once in a while we'll visit them..."

inter-ethnic relations

QUESTION: "Rosita, do you think that living with an American man is different from having a Colombian husband?"

ESTELA: "I would say that it is...I've seen what John is like... Hispanic men are friendlier, they're outgoing, they like parties, they like to bring their friends home. But not John. He's quiet...He likes to sit down in front of the TV and eat...But he doesn't really want people to come to his home..."

ROSITA: "Of course, on his birthday, at Christmas time, the family comes. His sons, my children...But it's the family, and you eat, and you talk, and it's over...It's okay for me...I'm already old...My children respect John very much...but they're very different...They complain that we don't have parties and dance at home...They say it's boring, that you just sit and talk...Only my youngest son lives with us. He's 17..."

intra-familial relations

ESTELA: "...I told Rosita that she'd go crazy with those kids. They're five different personalities...So in their place, if only two are home, then they cook for two...They have a dog, and the dog is more important than anyone else...The kids want you to wait on them, and they don't want to do anything for anyone else...If she doesn't help them take care of their apartment...The boys are lazier than the girls...I told Rosita, you know what, close your eyes and kick them out...Leave them in their apartment...So they've been living alone for a year..."

ROSITA: "On certain days, they know I'm going to their apartment. If there's dirty dishes, I wash them. I cook, so that when they get home from school, they find something ready to eat..."

ESTELA: "Neither her kids nor John's wash their own clothes..."

ROSITA: "John's son brings me his clothes to wash...They're the same ...No difference between the American and the Colombian kids..."

unionization

QUESTION: "Is there a union where you work?"

ROSITA: "Yes, and they've helped me several times with the children's health problems..."

present life conditions

QUESTION: "Where are your co-workers from?"

ROSITA: "Different places. Probably about ten countries, although most are Hispanic women. But obviously, everyone speaks at least some English...I don't speak English very well...I spoke a little when I married John...But I was working, I was working two jobs for six years...Night and day, to be able to pay for the plane tickets and bring the children...I only slept four hours a night...The headaches that I used to get...

"...Here you can earn money, save it up for a few years, and go out and buy what you need...Here in my house, I have everything that I need..."

amusements

QUESTION: "Do you watch much television?"

ROSITA: "I watch a little while I'm trying to fall asleep...I like the movies..."

ESTELA: "Nothing. I can't stand it."

ROSITA: "And since there where she lives her roommate has two little children who go to bed early..."

expectations

ESTELA: "When my daughter comes, she can get her equivalency degree and then go to college...And some English classes... now they give free English classes..."

childcare

QUESTION: "But when your daughter comes, who is going to take care of the baby?"

ESTELA: "You can pay someone from $20 to $35 a week to take care of the child...There where I'm living, there's a woman who charges $20. ...You can take the child there at seven in the morning, and at times, pick him up at six or seven in the evening...In Jackson Heights, there's a place that charges $30..."

Appendix B

Interview with María Fernández

general data

María Fernández is twenty-eight years old. She arrived in the U.S. a year ago. She is single. In Bogotá, Colombia, she studied education at a university. (She specialized in teaching children with learning handicaps.)

She was born in a city very close to Cali which I will give the fictitious name of Roxana, as requested by the interviewee. She lived in Bogotá for four and a half years. When she finished her studies, she returned to Roxana where she lived with her parents for two years before coming to the United States.

evaluation of Colombian situation

QUESTION: "Who did you live with in Bogotá, and why did you return to Roxana?"

"I wanted to stay in Bogotá but I had a hard time finding a job that would allow me to live away from my parents...I lived with a family in Bogotá...In Colombia, when you have graduated from a university, it's hard to find work. What's more, in some fields you need money to set up an office. In others, you need to know the right people.

life conditions in Colombia

"I like what I studied...But in Colombia, education is not connected to reality, there are no jobs. For example, I know many people who have studied architecture, and they are decorating display windows in stores. I was twenty-five years old when I got my degree, and I don't know many people. To get work you have to have connections, people on the inside...I had to return home and live under oppressive conditions that I thought I'd left behind me. It was like turning back the clock.

intra-familial relations

QUESTION: "Tell me about your family and who you lived with in Roxana."

"I lived with my father, my mother, an older brother and two younger brothers and a younger sister. I got along well with my younger sister /24 years old/. I didn't get along very well with the others. They tried to watch over us /younger brothers keeping track of older sisters/.

"I also have a half-brother on my father's side who didn't live with us. I met him by accident when I was older...at school...because we had the same last name...In our town there was a lot of discrimination against him and his mother. That was because he was my father's illegitimate child, my father being a well-respected doctor in the city.

"I was twenty years old when I met him. It seems that my mother never knew of his existence, and I don't think she would accept him. Getting to know this brother of mine was an incredible experience. The way he lived was so different from the way I lived. It hurt me to see how he was discriminated against and treated by everyone, including my father. My father didn't want him to get to know us. My father helped him with money, but not very much. I had a lot of problems in Roxana because of my friendship with this brother. People kept asking how it was possible for me to be friends with his mother,

a woman who had lived with my father.

"It is because of my relationship with this brother that I've become interested in politics..To see the harsh conditions in which he lived...He learned to live like the "pueblo"...We had many discussions about politics with him and his friends there...

"When we were older, my mother studied literature. I think we were an obstacle for her. But I didn't realize this until much later. I think she tried to take her frustrations out on us because she wanted to do other things..."

QUESTION: "Why couldn't she study and work? Was it because of her children or because of the city? What's Roxana like?"

"It's a small city, but it's close to Cali [one of the largest cities in Colombia]. A lot of people who live there work in Cali... My mother could have worked and studied. There was an aunt of ours, an old lady, who helped out at home. But my mother felt responsible for us children. When we were all at college, my mother was able to study. Each of us went to study in a different city, depending on where we were accepted."

life conditions in Colombia

QUESTION: "What kinds of work experiences did you have in Colombia?"

"I didn't start working until I returned to Roxana after I graduated. In the mornings I taught at a school for small children [pre-primary]. In the afternoons I taught at a center for children with learning problems.

"At the private school they paid me 3,500 pesos a month [about $70 in 1982]. At the Center they paid me 2,500 pesos [about $50]. I worked from 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM, and then from 2:00 PM to 7:00 or 8:00 PM...I liked both jobs, but they didn't give me enough money to live on my own.

"I got along well with the other teachers, but both salaries were exploitative. At the Center, the directors received 300 pesos for each private tutoring session with the children. At the private school, 200 pesos per session. There were ten children in my class... I talked a lot about this at home, especially with my father. Well, my father would say that a woman had to go from the father to a husband. I would get very angry...I rebelled...I stayed out late... I had a boyfriend, but at home they didn't like him because he had long hair...They didn't like my friends in general...because of our politics...He didn't want me to participate in politics...The situation became intolerable, to the point where they would answer the telephone and say that I wasn't home when I was."

decision to migrate

QUESTION: "How did you decide to come to the United States?"

"On the one hand, family pressures were becoming so unbearable that I didn't want to live at home any more. After I started going out with my boyfriend, the situation got even worse. When I'd go to a party, my father would go there to see if I was really there. He'd force me to leave and take me home in his car. It was the same thing with my sister...They weren't so strict with my brothers...I began getting my papers in order. I thought I'd go to Mexico."

QUESTION: "Why Mexico?"

"I wanted to specialize in my field, I was politically conscious of the exploitative conditions at work, but they said that I was being paid so little because I was a professional who was just starting out. ...Besides, if I went to Mexico I wouldn't have to learn another language...But my family pressured me about this, too. They /her parents/ said that to be in Mexico is the same as being in Colombia. There is a lot of prostitution in Mexico, a woman goes there and gets lost. 'Go to the United States, it's advanced there, they have technology.' They said that they would help me if I came to the United States. Well, what I wanted was to leave home...

migration evaluation

"I went to Vermont to study English in a college there. A professor from my home town who was in contact with this college got me a tuition scholarship...I came with a student visa...I didn't like that place. It was a very small town and people didn't even look at one another...I didn't like the atmosphere at the college either. I didn't stay there more than two months...I had some Colombian firends from my home town who lived in New York, in Queens, so I came.

"My parents used to send me money. Sometimes they still do. For example, since I'm not working now, they're helping me. But the money they send me is not enough to go to school on. I want to study art. /One month after this interview, she got a new job and began studying art, paying $30 a week for two classes./

expectations

"Before I came here, I had a totally different image of the United States. Arriving here was a great let-down."

QUESTION: "What was your image of the United States?"

"I thought I would find an incredible level of living here. And I did, but today I ask myself, incredible for whom? It's true that back home I earned low wages, but the work was easier because I was working in something I liked."

first job

QUESTION: "When did you start your first job in the United States?"

"After six months...I looked for a month and a half, and I couldn't find one. I looked in 'el garment' because with my student visa it was the only place where I could hope to find one. A Colombian friend of mine put me in contact with the unions...and the unions only get jobs in 'el garment.' Everywhere they kept asking about my work experience. That's how I learned I couldn't tell the truth, that I had to lie. I said I had several years' experience. This is a society that asks you to lie...I had a social security card...It was easy to get. They told me it was the most important document to have."

QUESTION: "How many jobs have you had since you came to the United States?"

working conditions

"I've had three jobs since I got here. In the first one, I only lasted three days. It was in a supermarket. There was a long shelf with different kinds of cigarettes, and I was a cashier for that section...I had to know how to figure and give change back very quickly... Everyone spoke English and I didn't understand anyone. I couldn't understand the cash register or learn the names of the cigarettes. The man paid me for the day and I left.

"Then I looked for work around 34th Street. It was impossible to get work through the newspapers. I would call the phone numbers that appeared in The New York Times and they would be disconnected. Or they would ask you to come in, and then they would say that there was no work...I began to go to the unions. But they weren't too helpful either. They only give you appointments and keep you on the job if they feel like it...In the first job I had, the belt job, I lasted six months. It was in Queens. I had to work standing up, putting labels on belts. The work could have been done sitting down, but they made you do it standing...From another section they brought me baskets full of belts. They paid me $3.25 an hour. In this factory, most of the workers in my section were women, Dominicans, Puerto Ricans...I was the only Colombian, and there were a few North American blacks...The majority were Latin American black women. There were seventy workers in all. There were men in the manufacturing section. That's where the belts were cut, sewn, and where the buckles were attached. Only women work in the packing section. The men brought us huge boxes with belts...

union jobs

working conditions

"The boss, a Jew, was on our backs all day long yelling 'faster, faster!' The boss yelled all day long, calling us animals and imbeciles...The work was so easy, so boring, exhausting...I got there at 8:00 and worked until 12:00. I had half an hour for lunch and then we would work until 5:00. There was a ten-minute break in the morning."

inter-ethnic relations

QUESTION: "How did you get along with your co-workers?"

"I talked very little. It was very hard for me to get used to the way people were, especially the Dominicans. I pitied them... They're so ignorant...It's hard to understand what they're saying, their Spanish is so full of slang. It's difficult to relate to people if you can't understand them. On the other hand, they're very vulgar. They used to say dirty things.

"There were two forewomen. They were Puerto Rican sisters who had been working at the factory for ten years. They treated us well, but the boss would yell at them if they weren't on our backs...There were two parties at the factory, on the birthdays of each of the forewomen.

unionization

QUESTION: "Was the shop unionized?"

"Yes, I think there was a union, but only for people with seniority."

QUESTION: "Did you talk about work at the shop?"

"No, everyone earned their salary and kept to themselves... and women earned the same salary, and there were women of all ages. Some were under eighteen, [very few] and some were over fifty [also very few]...We were all laid off and the factory was shut down...

working conditions

"The second job was hell. Belts there, too. It was on 34th Street in Manhattan...The other one was in Queens. I used a machine to cut out belts. Standing up the whole time. It was the largest factory on 34th Street. I got this job through the union which sent me to the "Dominican Employment Agency."

"There you had to fight for your salary every week. When you went to cash your check, the woman, a Puerto Rican, said that she didn't understand Spanish.

"People could barely speak to each other on the shop floor because of the noise of the machines. You had to eat lunch on the run. ...After about three months I was laid off...I was a seasonal worker.

"I got my current job through a friend who knows people in the unions. It's a diaper factory...There are fifty workers...I work sitting down...I sew...My hands and my back hurt me so! But it's better than my previous jobs...I line up the diapers on the machine and sew...It's very easy...They asked about my previous experience at this place too. I had never sewn in my life. The first day, the foreman taught me how to work the machine, and that was it...I've been there for a month...Most of the workers are Hindu women. They are the most oppressed. Sometimes they don't even take lunch. Because they can work more quickly they do piecework ...There is a Rumanian there who works at a totally different pace. She takes breaks, she talks. The Hindu women are desparate for work. They want more and more. Most of them are married...They are polite, but they don't even speak English, so it is difficult to communicate with them. ...You have to do about 2,300 yards a day.

"The boss makes people of different nationalities work together. I think he does it so they can't talk to one another...The work is so boring, it's always the same thing. You leave work so tired that you don't want to talk to anyone. In every place I've worked, I've only made one or two friends. When I go to another job, I never see them again.

"It takes me half an hour by train to get to my current job. [She now lives in New Jersey.]

amusements

"During the week I never go out...Only on weekends, and then only to the movies...I sleep a lot on weekends...I couldn't take this, so I began going to a psychologist who was suggested by a community center. The sessions are $10 each. The most interesting activity in my life is my art lessons."

problems related to legal status

QUESTION: "What is your legal situation?"

"My visa has expired. That worries me, but I manage. Now, if we were going to talk about legality, we would have to conclude that everyone in this country is illegal. That's because the country really belongs to the Indians!...Without documents I can only work in things like 'el garment.' I think that even resident Colombians have difficulties getting work, but not as much...When I'm laid off, I can't ask the government for help.

inter-ethnic relations

working conditions

"Look at the situation of my boyfriend. He's an American, he does the same kind of work that many illegal Colombians do. He carries boxes, but they're of letters, at the post office. But he gets $8.00 an hour, is covered by unemployment insurance, and gets vacations. I earn $3.50 an hour, and my work conditions are much worse. A boss who yells at me and can fire me when ever he feels like it, and who keeps telling me to work faster and faster...

"In all of the garment factories I've worked in, I think that

inter-ethnic relations

most of the workers were illegals. But I don't worry. People never talk to each other. Everyone is suspicious of everyone else. People get scared when someone new comes in...You're afraid to get into an argument with the boss. They say he's friends with the 'migra.'"

QUESTION: "What about when you go out? Don't you worry that you'll be picked up on the street?"

the "migra"

"Well, it's said that the 'migra' won't come into a factory without the consent of the boss, and that there are policemen at the Latin American restaurants near the factory. They start talking to you, ask you where you live, and invite themselves over...So you never speak to strangers...But I go out, I don't know, I figure that if I get caught and they send me back to Colombia, I have my home and my family there. But I know people who live in constant fear. How can Salvadoreans go back? They would be killed! I'd like to take a trip next year, but I don't know how to do it, without papers..."

strategies to get legal status

QUESTION: "How are you going to get your resident visa?"

"I don't know. My boyfriend says that on principle he would never get married. I almost left him because of that, because he just doesn't understand my problem. He doesn't understand the danger that I'm in...We've been together for five months. Sometimes I think that his not marrying me and helping me to get my residence shows a tremendous insensibility. Are North Americans really so different from us?"

inter-ethnic relations

QUESTION: "Different? How? What is your relationship like?"

"Well, he's very understanding. But he sees things differently. ...Sometimes it seems to be such a superficial relationship...I don't talk a lot about my fears, the things that are going on inside me. Here, people are used to being alone. How I miss my friends in Roxana! ...Nobody has time to talk about themselves here...People are very objective. People get together and talk about specific subjects. It's the same way with my boyfriend...He is very busy and so am I...

"There are good things in our relationship too. He helps with the household chores and his attitudes about sex are different. He's less concerned about 'machismo.'...I go out alone, come home late... He has his friends and I have mine. I always had friends who were politically aware, some of them were even militants...I can speak freely with him about sex...I used to be jealous over my Colombian boyfriend, but with this one I'm not. I feel secure.

"I think that the differences and problems in our relationship are cultural. Colombians are cheerful, they like to talk about themselves, to imagine things, and talk about their fantasies. People from Bogotá are supposed to be more philosophical.

"He's unhappy about my working conditions. He knows that Americans who work in 'el garment' have an alternative. They can leave. Of course, he works very hard too, and he's supervised by closed-circuit TV...But he earns more.

"Every once in a while we talk about marriage. I don't believe in marriage either, but I need to get married so that I can get my residence. He can't seem to understand this, in spite of the fact that he's so politically aware. This hurts me."

inter-ethnic relations

QUESTION: "Do you think that Latin Americans are treated differently from others in the United States?"

"Yes, I'm convinced that we are discriminated against."

QUESTION: "Because of your own experience?"

"Yes, when I started college, everyone who was not an American was discriminated against. Americans don't want to talk to other people...They sit at different tables...It was a very trying experience. I only stayed at that college for two months...However, I did get along well with some Mexicans...Yes, I got along very well with them...If store clerks decide that you're Latin American, they begin to watch you very closely. They seem to think that you're going to steal something. Once I went shopping for a pair of scissors. I wasn't very well dressed that day, and when I left the store, someone ordered me to go back and they made me open my bag. But it was hard for me to understand what he was saying. He opened my bag, and I asked him, 'Who are you? What do you want?' He showed me a police badge. I went back with him, and they searched my bag. Then the woman says to me, 'I'm sorry.'"

QUESTION: "You said that you're paid the minimum wage. What do you spend your money on?"

budget allocation

"Before, I could barely make ends meet. But now, I don't have as many expenses. My boyfriend is very understanding. Since he earns more, I don't pay for rent. All I have to pay for is part of the food. But since I'm taking these art courses, I don't have any money for anything else."

"I used to earn $113. But since I didn't claim any dependents, they took out taxes and I took home $105...Things were very difficult for me in Queens. The room, without a kitchen, cost $160 a month. The rest of my money went for food...There was no kitchen in the apartment...I never bought any clothes...I did buy a tape recorder and a radio."

female vs male migrant experiences

QUESTION: "How is it different for you as a Latin American woman in New York, as compared to the experiences of your Latin American men friends?"

"I don't think there's any difference. They complain a lot and say that this place is inhuman, too."

QUESTION: "Then why don't they go back?"

"For several reasons. Some are Salvadoreans, and if they go home the Junta will kill them. Others can't make it economically in their home countries."

QUESTION: "You come from a middle-class family. Would you agree that your migration cannot be described as just economic in character?"

"Yes."

remittances

QUESTION: "You never sent any money to Colombia, did you?"

"No, actually, they used to send me money."

values and reality

QUESTION: "Would you agree that your migration was largely the result of a personal search for freedom through which you could assert yourself as an individual?"

"Yes, that's the way it is."

QUESTION: "María, tell me a little about the differences between your life in Roxana and the one you're living now, in New York."

social life

"Here, life is physically exhausting. Back home, life is more leisurely. I had friends. I had more time...Here, after working you are so tired...At present, the art classes I'm taking are very important. The work in 'el garment' is turning me into an animal.

"I'd like very much to return, but how? I'd only return if I could lead an independent life, away from my parents, but that takes money...I won't go back to my repressive family.

expectations

QUESTION: "And what are your plans?"

"Plans? How can I plan?...I don't know, everything is so difficult. I want to learn how to paint...I know that everything depends on opportunities. How can you plan without opportunities?"

QUESTION: "And what about learning English, María. Don't you think it's important to take lessons? How are you going to get better work without knowing English?"

"I don't have time to study English. Not after working eight hours in 'el garment' and going to political meetings. /María is participating in the Colombian Human Rights Committee./ Sometimes I get home at one in the morning. There's not a whole lot of problems from not knowing English...then you get used to it. Time goes by."

Footnotes

1. This study is related to a broader research project conducted by Fernando Urrea Giraldo, "Life Strategies and the Labor Market: Colombians in New York City in the 1970s," New York Research Program in Inter-American Affairs, New York University, 1982. Previous reference to that study is suggested.

2. Urrea's study on Colombian migrants in New York (1982) presents a specific application of this theory.

3. "Every society has some form of organized economic activity. Sex is sex, but what counts as sex is equally culturally determined and obtained. Every society also has a sex/gender system -- a set of arrangements by which the biological raw material of human sex and procreation is shaped by human, social intervention and satisfied in a conventional manner" (Rubin, in Reiter, 1979: 157).

4. In Marx, the consumption of the worker as a person (individual) is distinguished from that of the consumption of capital, although they are considered to be interrelated. The consumption of the worker as a person would include: "1. productive consumption -- consumption of the means of production in the production of products; 2. the consumption of his labor by the capitalist; and 3. the life of the worker, or 'individual consumption' -- the worker consumes the means of his subsistence"(Marx, 1946: 416). (The author's translation.)

5. "There are three main theses which Althusser used to explain the nature of ideology in general. First, ideology is a representation of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their conditions of existence: this thesis implies a definite break with all conceptualizations of ideology as "false consciousness" or as a distorted representation of reality. Ideology is not a representation of reality at all. What ideology represents is men's lived relations with reality: it is a relation of second degree. Althusser insists that this lived relation is necessarily an imaginary one. Ideology then is not a representation of real conditions of existence (that is, the existing relations of production and other relations that derive from them) but a representation of an imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence. Second, ideology has a material existence... any analysis of ideology is an analysis of social relations themselves, not a reflection of social relations in the world of ideas. Third, ideology interpolates individuals as subjects..." (McDonough and Harrison in Kuhn and Wolpe, 1978: 17).

6. I prefer to say they are more oriented by their position in the family.

7. My use of the terms patriarchy, patriarchal relations, and patriarchal ideology is in accordance with the writings of Kuhn and Wolpe (1978), Rowbotham (1977), and Eisenstein (1979). See Garcia Castro, 1981. The reference is to asymmetrical power relations between the sexes and not just between specific individuals. "Because patriarchy is a system of power, it is incomplete to say that men are the oppressors

without explaining that they are oppressors because they embody the relations of patriarchy. To speak of individual men as "things" rather than as reflecting the relations of power is to conceive of male power in abstract rather than concrete form" (Eisenstein, 1979: 51).

8. See Roanet(1978), Goldmann (1978), and Willis(1979) among others for criticism of the concept of "false consciousness."

9. Each of these authors follows a different line of discussion.

10. See Appendix A for the entire transcription of one of the interviews with Estela and her sister, Rosita.

11. Estela was 43 years old when she came here.

12. I prefer the term "ascription to home non-paid labor" to the commonly used "sexual division of labor." According to different studies of Colombian women, they have always worked outside the home. In rural occupations and in the urban market, they sometimes did the same work as men, but always received lower remuneration. They were always, however, the only ones responsible for housework, child rearing, and daily non-paid labor for reproduction (Rey de Marulanda, 1981; Leon de Leal, 1977; Garcia Castro, 1979b, 1981, 1982).

13. This is demonstrated in chapter 5.

14. When I refer to the survey data, I use the terms "Fordham survey," "survey data," or "survey's informants." When I refer to women who were directly interviewed by me or Fernando Urrea, these women are mentioned simply as "interviewees."

15. Fernando Urrea and I were responsible for the codification and processing (SPSS) of survey data in December, 1981, with support from New York University's Computer Center (with the fine assistance of George Sharrard). Dr. Gurak's total sample includes Colombians and Dominicans in Queens and in some parts of Manhattan. We just used the part of the sample referring to Colombians in Queens.

Note: Tables in this study are from the following sources unless otherwise noted. The original data relative to Colombians in Queens up to December 1981 are from questionnaires elaborated and administered by Fordham University's Hispanic Research Center (coordinated by Dr. Gurak).

16. Each interview lasted at least three hours.

17. This is my first study related to international migration. My previous research experience has been in women's studies and internal migration. NACLA's study on undocumented workers convinced me of the importance of giving more attention to the life conditions of this group. I am also grateful to NACLA and to Americo Badillo, since he allowed me access to interviews conducted with undocumented migrants in 1979 (Badillo, 1979).

18. I am Brazilian, but I lived in Colombia for two years. The fears of being interviewed in some cases were related to the stereotype that the Colombian community is just composed of persons in the drug trade. As one woman commented, she was afraid I was looking for information about drugs, and although she did not know any people in that business personally, she was still afraid.

19. This paper began as a small project, a counterpoint presentation to the Urrea study. As I began to interview the women, to study them, to understand the implications of their situations, the project grew. Much remains to be done. There are many questions still to be asked, and to be answered. I began my research with the support of the NYU Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies and have continued with the support of a Brazilian research institution. The magnitude of this project, in any event, has resulted in this study becoming a labor of love, the love I feel for my

Colombian friends, both in Queens and in Colombia.

20. In 1960, there were 1,286 Colombian migrant men in the U.S. and 1,703 women. In 1976, there were 2,514 legal Colombian migrant men and 3,228 women (data from I.N.S.). From the 1970 census, a similar picture comes out: for the total New York population, the ratio of women to men was 10:9, among Colombians it was 10:8.

21. In order of their importance in the migrant stream, they are Cali, Bogotá, Medellín, and Barranquilla.

22. Percentage of total, including non-paid activities.

23. From 1960 to 1976, an annual average of 28 Colombian nurses entered the U.S., but the decrease in the legal entry of Colombian nurses was already noticeable by 1975 when just four came through legally (Cardona et al, 1980). According to a CCRP interviewee, "It is not because they don't have jobs that Colombian nurses leave Colombia. It is because we are badly paid and considered as third-class professionals by doctors and people in general. On the other hand, nursing is a well-respected profession in the U.S. There we are well paid and always there are jobs for us " (a Colombian nurse trying to come to the U.S., quoted in Cardona et al, 1980: 101; author's translation).

24. See analysis of the limitations of the Colombian census regarding women's work in Garcia Castro, 1982.

25. Chaney distinguished some cohorts in Colombian migration to New York; first, from 1918-1948, basically composed of some college-educated and middle level technicians; second, from 1948-1962, with a large percentage of people indirectly fleeing the effects of the Colombian civil war, known as "la Violencia;" and third, post-1962, whom she calls "economic exiles." Chaney calls attention to the unemployment rates in Colombia, to the problem of attaining higher education, and to the responsibilities of rearing children (providing education, etc.). These last factors are also constantly mentioned by those who arrived in the 1970s.

26. Some illustrations of the roles of women in these sub-cultures:

The Andean or American complex: Hispanic Catholic penetration in that region was built with swords and ideological impositions. The monogamic religious marriage was imposed. This surpassed other American Indian forms common to the Andean region such as single-mothering, free union, and "amaño"...Illegitimate children in some regions are not supposed to inherit from their fathers and matrilinear relations, as well as "avuncular" norms are found...In this region, while interviewing migrants who had return there, it was common to hear expressions like "I came back to take care of my father or "to be with my mother -- she is getting old."

The Santander or neo-Hispanic complex: Illegitimate children are not soc ly accepted and single mothers are discriminated against. It is an area of larger families. Women's chief characteristics should be "virtue" and "honor." One difference between this culture and the Antioquian one is that here people refer more to the nuclear family. Gutiérrez de Pineda emphasizes that affective demonstrations between family members are not common. For boys, family education brings up "machos," who should be aggressive and distant in their affective relations. Mothers and children do not express affection and intimacy by gestures and special ways of talking with each other. There is a strong sexual division of activities, and separation by sex of younger children.

The Antioquian or mountain complex: Since Colonial times, women have been responsible not only for housework, but also for administering the family's business while men migrated or raised cattle far away. But according to a "Paisa" (a person from Antioquia)popular saying, "The street is for men and the house is for women." According to Gutiérrez de Pineda,"All the folklore of Antioquia is full of the image of the 'traveling rabbit,' the popular image of the roaming and funloving Paisa (andariego

y buscalavida) who escapes from maternal protection to make a man out of himself, traveling far and wide, and thanks to his adventures (argusias) is successful, so that like the adventurers of Spanish tradition who made their fortunes in the Indies, he can return home full of honor and get a wife" (Gutiérrez de Piñeda, 1968: 307; author's translation).

Negro "fluvio minero" complex There is a strong incidence and social acceptance of consensual unions (stable and unstable ones), and high rates of single-mothering and polygamy are found. Catholic mores did not take root there. Legal marriage is found only in the upper classes. To have different wives and many children is considered a positive social value, but it was common that women would be economically responsible for child-rearing.

These observations are abridged from "Culture, Women and Migration," Garcia Castro, 1979b in which information from Gutiérrez de Piñeda was used in reference to internal migration in Colombia. The purpose of the "snap shots" given above is to quickly illustrate Colombian cultural diversity; of course this cannot form the basis for generalizations. For more information on women, family, and culture in Colombia, see Gutiérrez de Pineda, 1968.

27. The Fordham Survey just chose persons 18 years of age or older, so these data do not refer to the possible age distribution of the total Colombian population in Queens.

28. See Table 1, page 15.

29. The 1909 strike of the New York City garment workers came to be known as the "uprising of the 20,000." Harris comments on the women workers' participation in it. "Mostly young Jewish women walked out of New York City's garment shops over the initial objection of the male union leadership...It lasted three months...In this period they formed the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union" (Harris, 1981: 91).

On the garment industry, see Helfgott, 1959. He points out the following characteristics of the garment industry: competitive, uncertain, easy to enter, low capitalization, seasonal, fashion-oriented, technologically sluggish and primarily cheap labor-oriented, and concentrated where buyers congregate. The garment industry historically was fed by immigrants. For working conditions of women in the garment industry at the begining of this century, see Odencrantz, 1919, about Italian women.

30. The garment unions should be analyzed in relation to the garment industry's situation in New York. A specific part of this industry stayed in New York, and this affects its labor force composition. Sassen-Koob puts this clearly: "It can be argued, mostly on theoretical grounds at this point, that the massive departure of capital from the North, particularly from New York City, has become one of the conditions for capital to resume profitable operations here. The decline in economic activity has improved capital's bargaining position both in the factory and with respect to city government and, more generally perhaps, to public opinion. The massive loss of jobs has put pressures on workers to accept wage cuts, forfeit benefits and tolerate speed-ups, retrenchment, and automation as a way to save some jobs. The position of the ILGWU is perhaps the most dramatic illustration of this willingness to accommodate; as one commentator put it, it is 'the union that fights for low wages.' In New York City, capital to some extent took over control of the city after the declaration of fiscal crisis. It had a decisive role in getting the city to cut services and welfare rolls, and to lay off municipal workers. These interventions were not only accepted, but had an air of legitimacy about them which they would hardly have had in the 1960s" (Sassen-Koob, 1981: 21).

31. Chaney (1980) presents an interview with a Colombian woman in the garment industry who came to work in the men's section in a factory, doing the same job with the same machines that men used. But since this created rivalries among the workers,

and the men were against her, so the boss sent her back to the women's section.

Comparisons in productivity by sex in the cases I analyzed are not possible, since women and men used to be separated in the factories and in the labor market. According to Sokoloff, differences in productivity by sex cannot be empirically supported and to a great extent are within the realm of sexist ideology (Sokoloff, 1981). (See also Rothschild, 1976.)

32. In terms of average income. See Urrea, 1982.

33. Note the reference to baby-sitters and day care services in Estela's comments in Appendix A, the interview with Rosita.

34. The study will be referred to as the NACLA study from this point onward.

35. "The July 30, 1981 announcement by the Reagan Administration of its proposals on immigration policy sets the stage for an intense national debate on this topic. The Reagan approach which was developed by a Cabinet-level task force headed by Attorney General William French Smith and modified at three July Cabinet meetings calls for significant changes in laws governing entry to the United States. It will receive close scrutiny in the next few months and form the basis for legislative proposals soon to be submitted to Congress" (Rubin, 1981: 2).

In summary, the major aspects of Reagan's immigration/refugee policy proposals are: 1) Amnesty - "aliens living in the U.S. prior to January 1, 1980 would, if acceptable, be given a renewable term temporary resident status on a 3-year basis... after ten years they could apply for permanent resident status "if they were not otherwise excludable and could demonstrate English language capability"; Guest-Worker Program - "During a 2-year trial period 50,000 workers would be admitted annually for limited periods..."; Employer sanctions - "Employers of four or more workers would be fined $500 to $1000 for every undocumented worker employed..." The project has more elements. See Migration Today, 1981a: 4, and 1981b: 28-29.

36. Separation is a theme not studied in this project. Most of the cases I found in my direct interviews were related to women who were separated from their husbands prior to their migration to the United States.

37. Interviewees said they watch American TV stations in order to learn English. They listen to Spanish-language radio stations, and read Mexican women's magazines.

38. The Queens social structure and community life also deserve more space than I have given them. According to persons who live there and to researchers who know the area, Jackson Heights, where many of the interviewees live, and some other parts of Queens are old, structured communities, strongly influenced by European and Asian immigrants. European immigrants and Americans of European ancestry hold important roles in community life, directing local civic organizations and participating in local politics. (I am especially indebted to Catherine Benamou for her observations on this topic.) Conservative patterns predominate. Few interviewees have friends in the borough where they live.

39. More research is needed about women's organizations with special reference to those interested in Hispanic women, in order to discuss their usefulness, their role in the Hispanic community, and how ethnic differences are dealt with in their daily routine. For instance, the Hispanic Women's Center emphasizes education and employment and has projects directly concerned with women who work in the garment industry. According to information from the Center's members, lack of day care facilities at the Center is a serious obstacle to their participation in activities. But they do participate. "The Center emphasizes mutual concerns rather than differences among national backgrounds and fosters a coalition of socio-economic groups." (Stanton, 1981. "Hispanic Women's Center Newsletter, 2: 1.) My remarks about this association

are based on interviews with officials of the Center and from reading their materials.

40. Studies about migrant men's ideologies and their reactions to "women's changes" are also needed for a better understanding of women's levels of consciousness.

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